

**SOUTH KENSINGTON
AND ITS ART TRAINING**



W. H. SMITH & SON
P R I N T E R S
55 FETTER LANE
LONDON E.C



COLLECTOR OF
THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM



Photo

[Vandyke

(THE LATE) SIR HENRY COLE, K.C.B.
(Pioneer of systems of general Art education in the United Kingdom)

Frontispiece

SOUTH KENSINGTON AND ITS ART TRAINING

BY

FRANK P. BROWN, A.R.C.A. (LOND.)
(Member of the Royal Society of Arts, National Society of
Art Masters, &c.)

*Headmaster, Richmond (Surrey) School of Art; Visiting Drawing Master,
Merchant Taylors' School, Charterhouse Square, E.C.; Late Head of Art
Department, L.C.C. Norwood Technical Institute.*

WITH FOREWORD BY
COMMENDATORE WALTER CRANE, R.W.S.

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA

1912



19. XII. 1912
L.2489

TO MY DEAR WIFE

HANNAH

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

IN TOKEN OF MY APPRECIATION
OF HER KEEN INTEREST & KIND
HELP IN ALL MATTERS RELATING
TO ART AND ART EDUCATION

Halford House, Richmond.

October, 1912.

“The excellence of an artist as such depends wholly on refinement of perception ; and it is this mainly which a master in a school can teach, so that, while powers of invention distinguish man from man, powers of perception distinguish school from school.”—*Ruskin.*

P r e f a c e

THE object of this book is to place before its readers a short account of the work carried on at South Kensington in connection with the training of students for various branches of Art industry and of teachers of Art for the Government schools throughout the country from 1837 to 1912.

It is hoped that it will give an insight into the real position that the present system of training students occupies as part of our national education, and also the relation it bears to Continental schools organised for similar purposes.

In a book recently placed before the public, and entitled "Should We Stop Teaching Art?" the author frequently uses in support of his statements a set of figures* contained in the "Report of the Departmental Committee on the Royal College of Art" (1900-10), relating to the careers of State-trained Art students, which have been proved to be totally wrong and misleading; thus the conclusions arrived at in that particular work, and upon which an attempt is made to evolve a new system of Art education, are valueless.

It is also hoped that the matter contained in the following pages will prove that a great deal has already been accomplished as regards the successful training of Art students, and that if fault is to be found with our general system of Art education, it rests rather with the public and the manufacturers themselves than with the craftsman or the teacher of Art.

I have to express my deepest thanks to Mr. Walter Crane for the foreword which he has kindly written to this book.

* "In a period of ten years 459 students have been trained at the Royal College of Art; out of these only 32 have made the practice of Art in any form their livelihood, while 126 earn their living as teachers." (For the actual figures see page 26.)

Preface

The opinions of one who now occupies the first place among contemporary artists in matters relating to the Decorative Arts cannot be lightly dismissed when the question of State-aided Art training is brought before the notice of the public.

My thanks are also due to those fellow-students who have kindly allowed their work to be reproduced in this volume with the object of adding further proof of the successful training they received whilst studying at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, during the period 1900-10.

F. P. B.

Halford House, Richmond (Surrey),
October, 1912.

Contents

	PAGE
FOREWORD, by Commendatore Walter Crane, R.W.S.	xiii

CHAPTER I.

STATE-AIDED ART TRAINING IN ENGLAND, FROM 1837-1900	1
--	----------

1. Somerset House.
2. "Artists" and "Craftsmen."
3. The Teaching of Design.
4. Marlborough House.
5. The Great Exhibition, 1851.
6. The Prince Consort and Sir Henry Cole.
7. The South Kensington Museum.
8. "Works of Art on Loan" Exhibition.
9. National Art Training School.
10. Royal College of Art.
11. Mr. Walter Crane.

CHAPTER II.

STATE-AIDED ART TRAINING IN ENGLAND, 1900-10	21
---	-----------

1. The Departmental Committee.
2. The Fictitious Figures.
3. Successes of Students.

CHAPTER III.

THE REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE, 1900-10	30
--	-----------

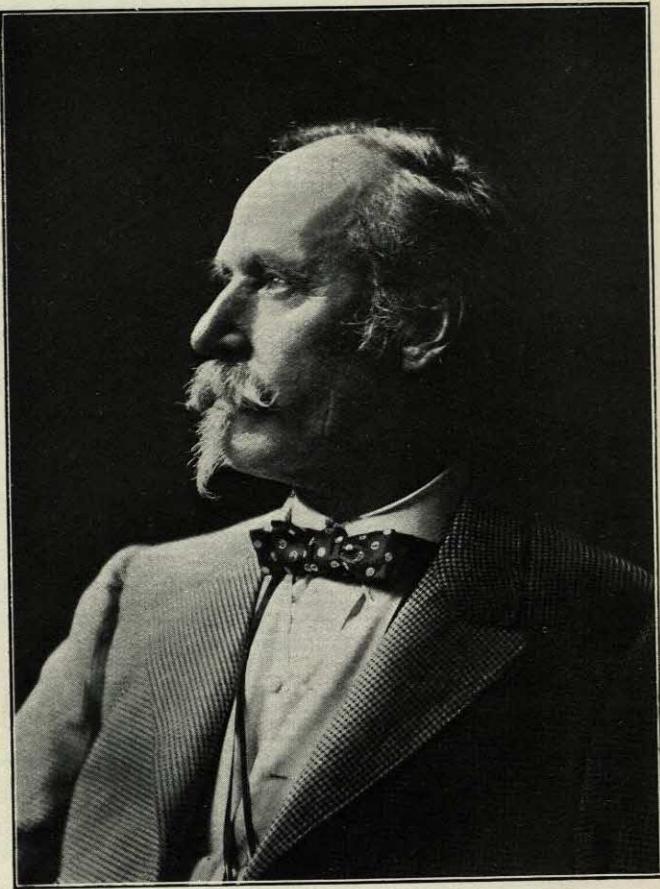
1. On the Staff and Curriculum of the Royal College of Art.
2. On the Training of Teachers.
3. On the Training of Designers and Craftsmen.
4. The Committee's Recommendations and Decentralisation.

Contents

	PAGE
CHAPTER III.—CONTINUED.	
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF ADVICE ON ART	55
Circulars 786 and 798.	
CHAPTER IV.	
THE INFLUENCE AND METHODS OF ART TRAINING	57
1. The Utility of Art.	
2. Early Training in Art.	
APPENDIX	63

List of Illustrations

(The late) Sir Henry Cole, K.C.B.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Commendatore Walter Crane, R.W.S.	<i>Facing page</i> xiii
Somerset Place, Strand, 1837	" " 1
(The late) Mr. Alfred Stevens (W. H. Youngman)	" " 6
The South Kensington Museum, 1857	" " 14
Memorial to King Edward VII. at Brighton and Hove (Newbury A. Trent)	" " 21
Figure (8 ft. high), Royal Courts of Justice, Strand (James A. Stevenson)	" " 22
Head, carved in Marble (James A. Stevenson)	" " 24
Memorial Tablet in Bronze at Salford Royal Hospital (Gordon M. Forsyth)	" " 26
" Bacchus and Silenus" (H. A. Budd)	" " 30
" Travelling Scholarship" Composition (Laurence Preston)	" " 32
The Students' Common Room, 1907 (Laurence Preston)	" " 34
Sketch for Fresco at Chelsea Town Hall (George R. Woolway)	" " 36
" Frederick I. defeated at Laguéro" (Lancelot Crane)	" " 38
" Bellerophon and Pegasus" (from an etching by Harold A. Rigby)	" " 40
Processional Cross; Brooch and Pendant (G. E. Sedding)	" " 42
Pottery (Gordon M. Forsyth)	" " 44
Roundel in Stained Glass (H. M. Travers)	" " 46
Carpet (J. P. Bland)	" " 48
Painted Decoration (G. P. Denham)	" " 50
Poster (G. P. Denham)	" " 52
Poster (F. C. Herrick)	" " 54
Poster (G. H. Day)	" " 58
Royal College of Science, South Kensington (W. M. Keesey)	" " 60
Royal College of Art, South Kensington	" " 60



Photo

[*Lafayette*

COMMENDATORE WALTER CRANE, R.W.S.
(A leading authority on Art and Art training during the past thirty years)

Foreword

AT a time when the question of State-aided Art training, and its results in the work of the Royal College of Art and in the Art Schools throughout the country, as shown in the National Competition, are again being discussed, a book like this of Mr. Frank P. Brown's, going as it does into the history of the schools from their beginning, is a timely and useful contribution towards the better and fuller understanding of the whole subject. Its careful perusal may be heartily recommended to all sincerely interested in this important matter, affecting as it does the educational welfare of our nation.

Everyone will agree that, to a proper understanding of the question, before any conclusions can be drawn, a knowledge of the actual facts is absolutely necessary.

Unfortunately many have been misled by the erroneous statistics unaccountably given in the Report of the Departmental Committee upon the Royal College of Art. These Mr. Brown corrects, but it seems strange that, though the serious inaccuracies in this Report have been publicly pointed out—notably by Mr. Alan Cole in a letter to the *Times* (July 30, 1912)—no official correction has yet been issued, so far as I am aware, which, in common justice to both the students and the teaching staff of the Royal College of Art, is certainly due.

Mr. Brown (who is now Headmaster of the Richmond School of Art) makes a spirited defence of the Royal College, its teaching and its results, and he, as a distinguished student of the College, having passed through the full course and taken his degree as an Associate, is in a peculiarly advantageous position to treat of the inner working of the College since its drastic reorganisation in 1900.

Foreword

Every institution, of course, should be prepared to meet, and even to welcome, candidly given and well-considered criticism; but it cannot be said that the Royal College of Art has received fair treatment so far, and recent critics do not appear to be aware of its real status or the admirable work it is doing under first-rate Professors. Mr. Reginald Blomfield, for instance, whose suggestions have received a good deal of attention, advocates the higher teaching of Art under practical artists who should be able to carry on their private professional work, which is precisely what the Professors of the Royal College have been doing; but he also suggests, as a sort of cure for incompetent work, the limitation of the course of study in the ordinary Art School to "drawing and modelling"—two of the most difficult of all the crafts to win any distinction in!—ignoring the remarkable progress of the schools in design since the introduction of craft classes.

Indeed, it is not State aid that Art education of the country has suffered from, but rather State neglect. Important recommendations made by the advisory council who were responsible for the organisation of the Royal College of Art under the new scheme have been constantly shelved by the Board. It has not been allowed to develop, as was intended, as the leading institution for Art education, so as to comprehend every branch of design; and it has never been granted a proper and well-equipped building, such as the leading provincial cities frequently command for their Art Schools, though plans have been proposed from time to time, and the inadequacy and inconveniences of the present building are generally admitted, and have even been commented upon by foreign visitors!—as Mr. Brown shows.

Presidents of the Board of Education come and go, but though there have been exceptions, they very rarely show any keen interest or knowledge of Art, and political exigencies prevent those who do from staying in office long enough to do much good.

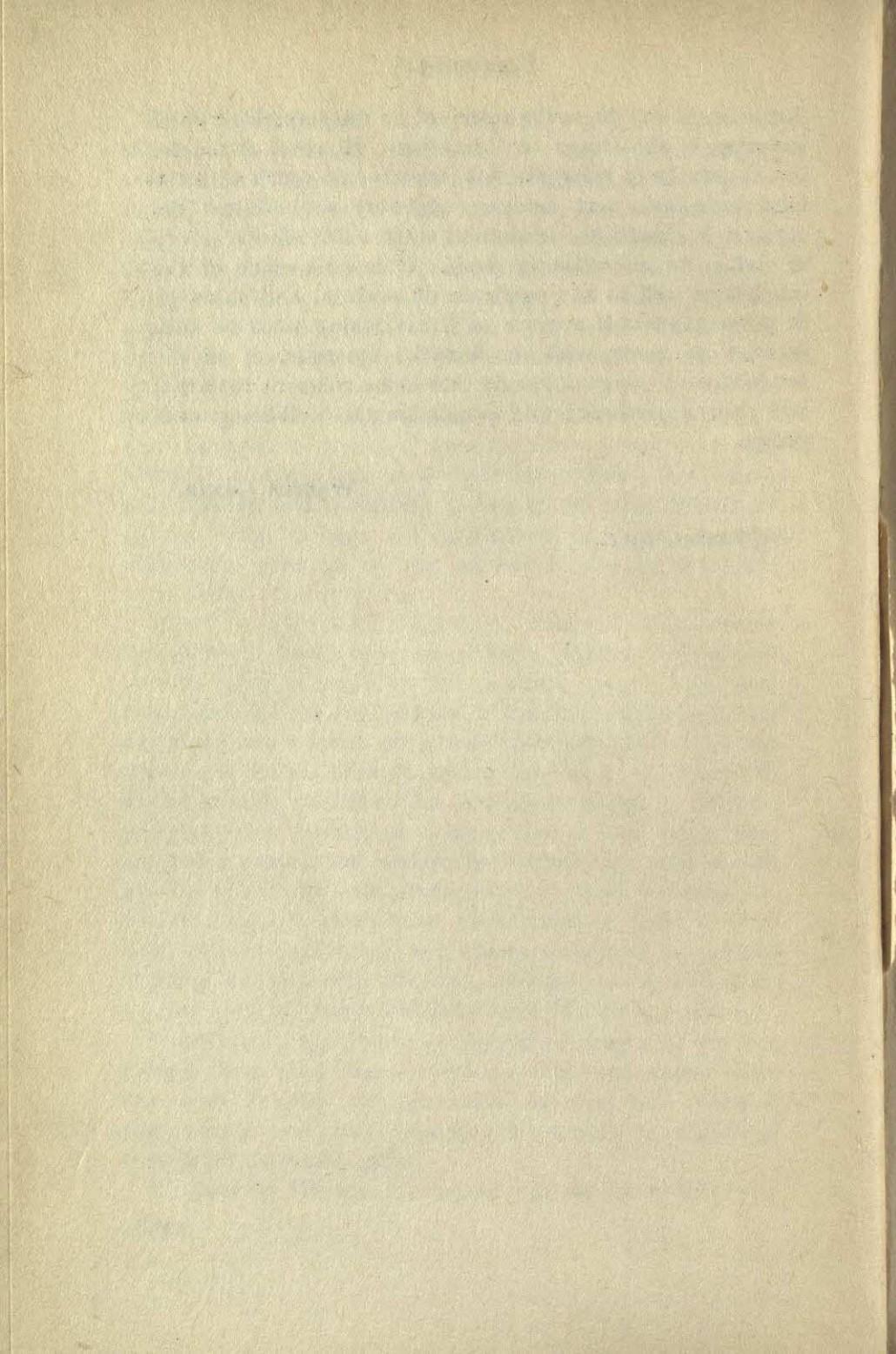
We have no Minister for Art, so that our Art Schools and

Foreword

Art masters may be at the mercy of an unsympathetic chief secretary at the Board of Education. However desirable, too, it may be to bring the Art Schools into touch with the local industries, and however necessary are efficient designers, it should be remembered that, after all, *the study of Art is an education in itself*. It is an avenue of the intellect as well as an expression of emotion, and although in some quarters it appears as if everything must be subservient to commercial or financial interests, it is the production of things of beauty that alone concerns the artist and their appreciation and possession the well-being of a people.

WALTER CRANE.

September, 1912.



CHAPTER I.

STATE-AIDED ART TRAINING IN ENGLAND FROM 1837 TO 1900.

I.—SOMERSET HOUSE.

A SHORT outline of the history of the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, which institution is the chief centre of State-aided Art education in this kingdom, is contained in the Appendix to the "Report of the Departmental Committee on the Royal College of Art" (1900-10): details are given of the various rearrangements made during that period, 1837-1900, of the courses of study which students who attended for instruction were expected to follow.

It was, of course, impossible, in the small space devoted to the subject in the Report, to give sufficient matter which would enable the reader to realise what efforts had really been made by the State towards improving the general taste of the people through the means of Art education, of which South Kensington has all along been the main source of inspiration during that lengthy period.

We find that the first attempt made towards the adoption of a general system of Art education in this country is contained in the following paragraph of the above-mentioned Report :

"In 1835 and 1836 the House of Commons appointed a Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, which was directed to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population) of the country; also to inquire into the constitution, management, and effects of institutions connected with the arts."

This Committee came to the following conclusion :

"That from the highest branches of poetical design down to the lowest connection between design and manufactures, the arts had received little encouragement in this country."

Whilst recommending the formation of a normal school of design, the Committee urged that in any such school.

"not theoretical instruction alone, but also the direct practical application of the arts to manufactures, ought to be deemed an essential element."

South Kensington and its Art Training

And further, that

"the principles of design ought to form a part of any permanent system of national education such as was then under contemplation."

There is but little doubt that the recommendations of this Committee, which resulted in a School of Design being opened at Somerset House on 1st June, 1837, have had a wide and far-reaching effect on the welfare of the nation as regards Art manufactures and general education. One is able to realise, from the wording of this Committee's recommendations, what the general idea of Art education was then supposed to be; and there also seems to have been a slight misconception as to what the word "Art" really meant, which perhaps needs a short explanation.

II.—“ARTISTS” AND “CRAFTSMEN.”

I refer to the terms

“highest branches of poetical design”

and

“to the lowest connection between design and manufactures,” which are used in conjunction with each other in the wording of the Committee's Report.

It is commonly supposed that the production of a design for manufacturing purposes requires less intellectual power than that which is required for work under the heading of “high poetical design” here understood as meaning “picture painting.”

The introduction of machinery into modern manufacturing conditions has perhaps been the chief cause of this supposed distinction; the words “artist” and “craftsman” are generally used to distinguish the “painter in the studio” from the “craftsman in the factory.”

The conditions governing our manufacturing system necessitate, as a general rule, the actual attendance of the designer *at the factory*, who is consequently spoken of as a “craftsman,” while the painter flourishes under the title of “artist” because he works in his private studio, free from the whirl of machinery, etc. The result has been that the fashion, dating from Roman times, of despising the dealer in commodities is now extended to the Art worker who becomes a craftsman.

State-aided Art Training in England, 1837-1900

There is a far greater demand at the present time for the craftsman's productions than for easel pictures, and it is quite possible that at a later date the wording of the phrases to which I have referred may read

from "the highest level of design for manufactures" down "to the lowest branch of poetical design."

The "highest level in poetic design" was reached by the Greek vase painters and the Chinese and Japanese decorators; yet these were all craftsmen in the modern sense of the word. No such broad division existed between painter and craftsman during the great periods in Italian Art.

The continual production of easel pictures, *usually* for no particular purpose, has produced a condition of affairs which might be easily checked if the State introduced a scheme whereby the energies of students were expended on the decoration of municipal buildings, schools, etc., thus making their labours practical and useful; many capable students have been led astray by the picture-painting craze, whereas had their abilities been applied to more commercial needs, both they themselves and the public would have greatly benefited; the glory of having their work shown at a picture gallery has been the first great incentive to such students, though the work may be lost to the public gaze for ever after the close of the exhibition.

The Council appointed to control the work of the newly formed school of design at Somerset House consisted of the President and Vice-President of the Board of Trade, Members of Parliament, Royal Academicians (Sir F. Chantrey, Mr. C. L. Eastlake), and others. At their first committee meeting, held at the offices of the Board of Trade on 14th April, 1837, they appointed Mr. J. B. Papworth as Director, and further instructed him to secure the services of an efficient staff for the working of the school, the names of those subsequently appointed being :

Headmaster	...	...	Mr. Lambalette.
Assistant-Headmaster	...	...	Mr. Spratt.
Modeller	...	...	Mr. James Leigh.
Secretary and Librarian	...	...	Mr. Papworth, Junr.

It was decided that the school should be open for the use of the students on five days during each week, the fees for admittance being fixed for the time being at 4s. per week for full-time students; this amount, however, was reduced at the end of the same year to 4s. per month.

South Kensington and its Art Training

Evening classes were commenced on 1st August, exactly two months after the date of the opening of the school.

At a meeting of the Council, held on the 7th July, 1837, it was resolved that "drawing from the human figure should not be taught to the students," the Council also approving the Report of a Special Committee, which laid down :

"That the object of the school ought to be to afford manufacturers an opportunity of acquiring a competent knowledge of the fine arts, in so far as these were connected with manufactures, and that steps ought to be taken to limit the students to these interests."

A year later, however, on the 10th August, 1838, it was resolved "that the human figure for the purposes of ornament *be taught in the school.*"

At the opening of the school it had been supposed that the exclusion of drawing from the life was the best means by which the limitations of the students to ornamental interests could be secured. Here, again, is seen an attempt to draw a broad division between "fine" and ornamental Art, with the result that later on, in the Departmental Report, we read :

"During 1845 there was some dispute between Mr. Wilson, the Director, and Mr. J. R. Herbert (afterwards Mr. J. R. Herbert, R.A.), Headmaster of the evening classes, which appears to have been due to Mr. Herbert's failure to confine the instruction in figure drawing within the limits proper to ornamental as distinct from fine art."

Mr. Wilson, in his preliminary suggestions for the conduct of the school, urged that

"persons studying to become artists rather than ornamentists should be excluded from the school."

The problem of how to draw a dividing line between instruction to be given to students in "fine" and in "applied" Art was beginning to make itself felt, and the utter impossibility of following out Mr. Wilson's ideas resulted in Mr. Herbert resigning his position as Headmaster of the evening classes.

To prevent a student going beyond the craftsman's limit when drawing from the life is a difficult and impossible task, and one can easily understand Mr. Herbert resigning. That such a system of teaching was doomed to an early failure is proved when we read, in the words of the Report, that

State-aided Art Training in England, 1837-1900

"Mr. Wilson appears either to have found it impossible to carry out this theory, or, more probably, to have arrived at different principles."

The number of students in attendance at the end of the first twelve months was somewhat small, yet we find that no less a sum than seventy guineas was subscribed by private individuals interested in the work of the school as prize-money, to be awarded to those students who produced the best designs for manufacturing purposes, which included silk hangings, carpets, paper hangings, shawls, etc.

Mr. Papworth early resigned his position as Director of Studies, as the Council felt that the work attached to the position could be better undertaken by someone fulfilling the duties of organiser and secretary combined. In consideration of Mr. Papworth's services, however, the Council elected him as a member of that body to assist in their future deliberations.

A rearrangement of the staff now became necessary; this resulted in a saving of £200 of the Parliamentary grant of £1,300 allocated to the uses of the school.

Some portion of this income was being spent in the purchase of casts taken from objects (the Elgin Marbles, etc.) in the British Museum, which were to be used as examples for drawing purposes. The Government grant was raised to £1,500 in 1839. About this time Mr. Dyce, the new Superintendent of the school, was sent on an official visit to the Continent, with the object of his securing information relating to foreign methods of training students in design; and on 13th January, 1840, the Council passed a resolution to the following effect: "That the order of study pursued in the German schools, by which the drawing of the figure is made subsequent to a course of ornamental design, should be adopted." The average daily attendance was now about thirty, most of whom were of the juvenile type.

In the year 1841 the Council (of which the Right Hon. H. Labouchere was the chairman) decided to offer six exhibitions, of an amount not to exceed £30, for the purpose of educating six teachers of drawing. The Council also drafted a circular, which was sent to the governing bodies of eighteen large towns in the provinces, offering therein aid towards the formation of schools of design in those localities. Manchester, Birmingham, and Coventry were the first towns to

South Kensington and its Art Training

avail themselves of this offer, and schools were immediately opened in each of these three centres. An application was also received from the School of Practical Design* in Leicester Square, desiring that the institution might be placed under the control and superintendence of the Government School of Design. H.R.H. Prince Albert (who afterwards played a leading part in matters relating to Art education, and to whom the present Museum, to a great extent, owes its origin and name—The Victoria and Albert Museum) distributed the prizes to the successful students of the school at Somerset House on 23rd August, 1841, the actual number of students on the registers then being :

Day students, 55. Evening students, 140.

Classes for female students were also being organised, the Council directing that inquiries be made for a School-mistress properly qualified to superintend the conduct of the students whilst at school, and to teach the rudiments of the arts of design as applicable to manufactures, at a salary of £150.

III.—THE TEACHING OF DESIGN.

Towards the end of the year 1846 a special Committee was appointed "to consider the issues which had then been raised" :

"The main attack upon the school was to the effect that, while it gave excellent instruction in imitative drawing and colouring, it had entirely failed to attain its object as a School of Design. It was urged 'that the principles of ornament and the practice of original design, as applicable to manufactures, were not efficiently taught,' and that no attempt was made to give the students 'a knowledge of manufacturing processes so as to enable them to unite fitness and practicability in ornament.' "

Mr. Wilson, who gave evidence before this Committee, expressed scepticism as to the value of direct teaching of original design, but favoured what he termed "the Italian method," by which every artist studied ornament, and if he failed in the higher branches of Art became an ornamentist.

The word "ornamentist" is here used in the place of "craftsman," as distinct from "painter" or "artist." What Mr. Wilson evidently had in his mind was that students who found themselves incapable of drawing the human figure correctly should confine themselves to ornament, meaning

* Originally named "École de Dessin."

State-aided Art Training in England, 1837-1900

floral, geometric, and conventional forms, in which such highly-skilled draughtsmanship as that required for figure was perhaps unnecessary.

Mr. Alfred Stevens, then an assistant master in the school, expressed the opinion "that a student of the Florentine Academy who had been educated as an artist required little special study to make him an excellent ornamentist."

This is an excellent argument against the present cry over "technicalities" in connection with the training of designers for manufacturing processes, which are just as easily mastered by the competent draughtsman as ornamentation was by the Florentine Academy student.

Some interesting remarks are made in reference to Mr. Stevens's connection with the school in "Alfred Stevens and His Work," written by Mr. Hugh Stannus, and published by the Autotype Company in 1891.

A letter which is there quoted states :

"I was sent for the other day to Somerset House and offered a place in the School of Design as *Professor of everything*."

But two years later he wrote to a friend : "I have, as you may have heard, just given up my place at Somerset House—not before I was heartily sick of it."

He had been engaged to teach the morning classes architectural drawing, perspective and modelling, also ornamental painting if required, for two hours daily, at a salary of £150 per annum.

A further letter stated :

"In after years he expressed himself as disgusted with the meddlesome supervision by ignorant Government clerks; and he could scarcely bring himself to behave with courtesy to any other officials with whom he was afterwards brought in contact. Thus the school lost his inspiration; and no surprise need be felt at the slough of despond into which the decorative teaching sank, until, in 1860, his influences returned at second-hand, through his pupils Sykes and others, to South Kensington, under the enterprising management of the late Mr. (afterwards Sir) Henry Cole."

Again, in 1849 a Select Committee produced a Report, in which they noted the practical unanimity of witnesses "in thinking the maintenance of Schools of Design to be an object of national importance." They urged "the importance of selecting as masters men practically acquainted with designing." Another Report, prepared by the chairman of this Committee, dealt with the failure of the general system

South Kensington and its Art Training

of Schools of Art to produce any material effect upon manufactures, and stated that :

" The school should have three functions : To give elementary instruction in Art, to improve Art workmen actually engaged in manufactures, and to create a more educated class of original designers."

Lectures to the students on ornament and the application of design were given during this period, and the lecturer, Mr. R. N. Wornum, in a letter to the Board of Trade (under which Department the school was then organised), explained :

" That manufacturing processes do not involve specific modifications in the education of the designer, which must for all designers be identical as regards the principles of ornamental art. The conditions of limited plant or special machinery seemed to him insignificant, and could be easily ascertained when the pupil attempted to apply his knowledge. He had intended to write some lectures on the practical side of designing, but from three and a half years' experience found no materials for the purpose.

" He held that ' the designer who was master of the principles, and aware of the comprehensive range of his art, would find the manufacturing conditions but momentary obstacles and insignificant compared with the importance of a thorough knowledge of design itself. '

Exhibitions of the work of the students attending the School of Design were now deemed advisable, and one, the forerunner of our present National Competition, was held at Gore House,* the residence of the accomplished Lady Blessington, in the autumn of the year 1851.

The work shown was of an elementary character, and in the following spring an exhibition of advanced studies only was held. Schools were allowed to send the whole of the work executed by their students in competition for medals, etc., and classification became somewhat difficult. This led later on to the field of Art being mapped out by Mr. Richard Redgrave into twenty-three subjects or stages—Freehand, Model Drawing, Light and Shade, etc.—which were grouped as a basis for the award of Teaching Certificates.

IV.—MARLBOROUGH HOUSE.

In 1852 the objects of the school were defined as being :

" Firstly, general elementary instruction in Art, as a branch of national education among all classes of the community, with the view of laying the foundation for correct judgment, both in the consumer and the producer of manufactures ;

* Stood on the site now occupied by the Royal Albert Hall.

State-aided Art Training in England, 1837-1900

"Secondly, advanced instruction in Art, with a view to its special cultivation; and

"Lastly, the application of the principles of technical art to the improvement of manufactures, together with the establishment of museums, by which all classes might be induced to investigate those common principles of taste which may be traced in the works of excellence of all ages."

These objects were certainly a great step in the right direction, and point to the conclusion that, if the present problem of Art education is to be solved correctly, a graduated system of instruction from the elementary school upwards should be instituted; and it must also be borne in mind what the final object of all Art education should be: not only to produce craftsmen or painters, but people of "taste," if Art is going to be of any service to the nation as a whole.

About this period demonstrations were given in technical processes, and Professor Semper, a distinguished architect of Berlin, was appointed as Professor of Ornamental Metal-work. The school also became a centre for the training of teachers for the provincial schools, which were rapidly growing throughout the country, Mr. R. Burchett being appointed to take charge of these training classes.

The Female School was now transferred to Gower Street, and has quite recently been amalgamated with the London County Council Central School of Arts and Crafts.

More exhibitions of the work of students were organised, and in the *Art Journal* of 1852 we read the following:

"By the permission of Her Majesty, Marlboro' House has been again made a source of public instruction and gratification. 'The Government School of Design,' or, as we presume we are hereafter to call it, 'The School of Ornamental Art,' has here exhibited the works of its students, not only those of London, but those of Scotland, Ireland, and the Provinces. The private view took place on the 18th May; on the day preceding the Queen honoured the collection by inspecting it, and on the 19th it was opened to the public free of charge."

It was the first time that the results of the labours of the numerous schools throughout the country were concentrated in one focus so as to enable the public to ascertain how far these institutions generally were effecting the purpose for which they were established.

In the same year Messrs. Pugin, Cole, Owen Jones, and Redgrave were supplied with a sum of £5,000 out of the

South Kensington and its Art Training

surplus fund of the Great Exhibition of 1851, to be expended on purchases for the Government School of Design, in order to benefit the pupils, but some dissatisfaction was expressed over their purchases.

V.—THE GREAT EXHIBITION, 1851.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 had been the means of awakening among the people a knowledge of and love for the applied arts, which previously it had only been possible for them to obtain by paying visits to private collections; consequently they had been unable to realise what good results could accrue from the direct application of art to manufactures. Picture galleries at that period were practically unknown, and what few there were existed in private houses, which were only open to the public at fixed periods during the year.

In the preface to the catalogue of the exhibits, issued shortly after the close of the Exhibition, we read that :

"The results of the Exhibition are pregnant with incalculable benefits to all classes of the community ; the seed has been planted, of which the future is to produce the fruit ; among the eager thousands whose interest was excited and whose curiosity was gratified, were many who obtained profitable suggestions at every visit ; the manufacturer and the artisan have thus learned the most valuable of all lessons, the disadvantages under which they had laboured, the deficiencies they had to remedy, and the prejudices they had to overcome.

"But it is to the honour of Great Britain that, notwithstanding the great risk incurred by inviting competitors from all nations of the world—prepared as they had been by long years of successful study and practical experience—the fame of British manufacturers has been augmented by this contest ; and there can be no doubt that when His Royal Highness Prince Albert issues his summons to another competition, British supremacy will be manifested in every branch of Industrial Art."

The objects of the Government Schools of Design, to improve manufactures, were also having some effect, which can be realised when we read in that same catalogue the following description of one of the exhibits :

"A sideboard, carved in walnut wood, is the entire work, design and execution of Mr. H. Hoyle, of Sheffield, a young man who is largely indebted to the Sheffield School of Design, of which he is a pupil, for the great ability displayed in this production. It has been executed under considerable difficulties, the producer having

State-aided Art Training in England, 1837-1900

to labour at one of the manufactories in the town three days in the week for his maintenance, while he devoted the remaining three to the sideboard. It is a well-studied and very beautiful example of carved woodwork."

This statement can be taken as representing the general manner in which the schools were effecting their useful purpose. Looking back to this period, one can easily understand why ornament ran riot at the Great Exhibition of 1851, which had been the first real attempt to bring the artist, the manufacturer, and the public all into direct communication. Nevertheless many of the exhibits were of a high standard in workmanship and design, and what over-elaboration—a fault which we usually associate with that Exhibition—occurred in the decoration of objects can be excused on account of the general enthusiasm of all those concerned.

Mr. R. N. Wornum (whom we have already referred to as lecturer on ornament at the School of Design) wrote an essay (for which he was awarded a sum of one hundred guineas by the proprietors of the *Art Journal* at that period) on the "Exhibition as a Lesson in Taste." In the introduction to the same he states :

"There is perhaps no province of industry in which the advantages of an intercommunication of ideas are more direct than in that of Art manufacture; and this must be more specially the case when the means of production of the various parties are pretty nearly mechanically equal. The differences of results arise purely from differences of degree of artistic skill, depending on the greater or less cultivation of those faculties of the mind which conduce to that species of judgment termed Taste. It is evident that Taste must be the paramount agent in all competitions involving ornamental design, where the means or methods of production are equally advanced; but where this is not the case, the chances are still very greatly in the favour of taste over mere mechanical facility, provided low price be not the primary object.

"The great object of attainment is Taste, which is not a mere impulse of the fancy, but dependent upon the operations of reason as completely as any other conclusion respecting good or bad, or right or wrong, to which we attain by the mind's experience."

VI.—THE PRINCE CONSORT AND SIR HENRY COLE.

Interest in Art education was developing rapidly, and an interesting meeting was held on 4th June, 1852, at the Westminster Mechanics' Institution, Great Smith Street, for the purpose of establishing drawing schools in the metropolis and its vicinity.

South Kensington and its Art Training

Mr. Cole (afterwards Sir Henry Cole), Superintendent of the School of Design, remarked that fourteen years had elapsed since the Government established the Central School of Design at Somerset House, followed by the organisation of twenty-one other schools located in all parts of the United Kingdom; but he went on to show that schools were to be considered as failures more or less, and this he attributed

"to a too hasty assumption that there existed students already qualified by sufficient elementary knowledge to enter them, and also that there were manufacturers sufficiently convinced of the value and importance of these schools, and, lastly, that we had 'a public sufficiently educated to be able to appreciate their results.'"

Mr. Cole further stated that

"Experience in every one of the twenty-one schools had proved that students did not exist sufficiently qualified, but had to be trained, not merely to be able to understand and practise the principles of design, but to learn the very elements of drawing. Experience had also proved that manufacturers were slow to recognise the existence of any scientific principles in design, and were too impatient for results; that they could only look to the demand of the markets, being necessarily under the thraldom of fashion and caprice, or, in other words, bound to obey the ignorance of the public; and whilst the public were the ultimate and absolute judges of the results of the schools, they have been allowed to remain uninformed in the existence of principles which might assist them to judge such results correctly."

Towards the end of the same year Mr. Cole delivered a lecture at which the Prince Consort was present, and declared the merit of the establishment of the Department of Practical Art at Marlborough House to consist in its being the foremost, uniform and consistent—though often-times unknown—advocate of the better education of the people. Her Majesty had assigned forty rooms in Marlborough House for the Departmental purposes.

The grand object of the establishment, to improve British manufactures, had not been effected.

The experience of many years had shown that it is not enough to produce good designs unless the taste of the consumer is sufficiently educated to appreciate them.

Until Art education is more generally extended, and the principles of form, and of the harmony and contrast of colours, are better understood and acted upon by the people, in vain is it for the manufacturers to produce good designs,

State-aided Art Training in England, 1837-1900

while staring and vulgar patterns and heterogeneous assortments—if the term may be so misapplied—of colours alone meet with the patronage of the public.

If the public taste demands good designs and well-assorted colours, both will be produced.

The manufacturer, observed Mr. Cole, if he would, has really no option about serving his consumers. He simply obeys his demand. If it be for gaudy trash, he supplies it; if for subdued refinement, he will supply it too. The public, according to its ignorance or will, indicates its wants, the manufacturer supplies them, and the artisan only does what the manufacturer bids him. The improvement of manufactures is, therefore, altogether dependent upon the public sense of the necessity of it, and the public ability to judge between what is good and bad in Art. Our first and strongest point of faith is that, in order to improve manufactures, the earliest work is to *elevate the Art education of the whole people*, and not merely to teach artisans, who are the servants of manufacturers, who themselves are the servants of the public.

The instruments by which these views are to be carried out are the Schools of Design, metropolitan and provincial, the elementary drawing schools to be established throughout the Kingdom in connection with the Department of Practical Art, and the Museum of Ornamental Art at Marlborough House.

The Schools of Design are limited to the instruction of those who intend to study and follow the pursuit of ornamental design.

The intention of the elementary schools is more extensive than that of the Schools of Design; they are intended to benefit all classes who are willing to profit by the advantages offered to them, and “are established with a view to give instruction in drawing simply as a language useful in every relation of life, and have reference rather to a power of expressing *form* by lines than to any ornamental or other special direction of the studies.”

These elementary schools are to be established in every town, and there is to be a central school in every district into which the best pupils are to be drafted. Besides its use to the students of the Schools of Design, the Museum of Ornamental Art will, it is thought, promote the Art education and cultivate the taste of those grown-up men and

South Kensington and its Art Training

women who consider themselves too old to go to school, and whom the onward tendency of the times and the march of improvement have at once convinced of their deficiencies and of the necessity of acquiring some knowledge of Art.

Mr. Cole concluded his lecture with the following words : "Our work is a fight against national ignorance in Art, to be won by persuasion and reason."

The method by which awards were granted to students now came up for discussion, and the report of the Commission of 1853 recommended that on future occasions one of the provincial masters should be associated in the Commission of award for medals, books, etc., which had usually consisted of three persons ; and at a meeting of masters held in the spring of that year Mr. Young Mitchell, Headmaster of the Sheffield School of Art, was selected by them to fill this office for 1854.

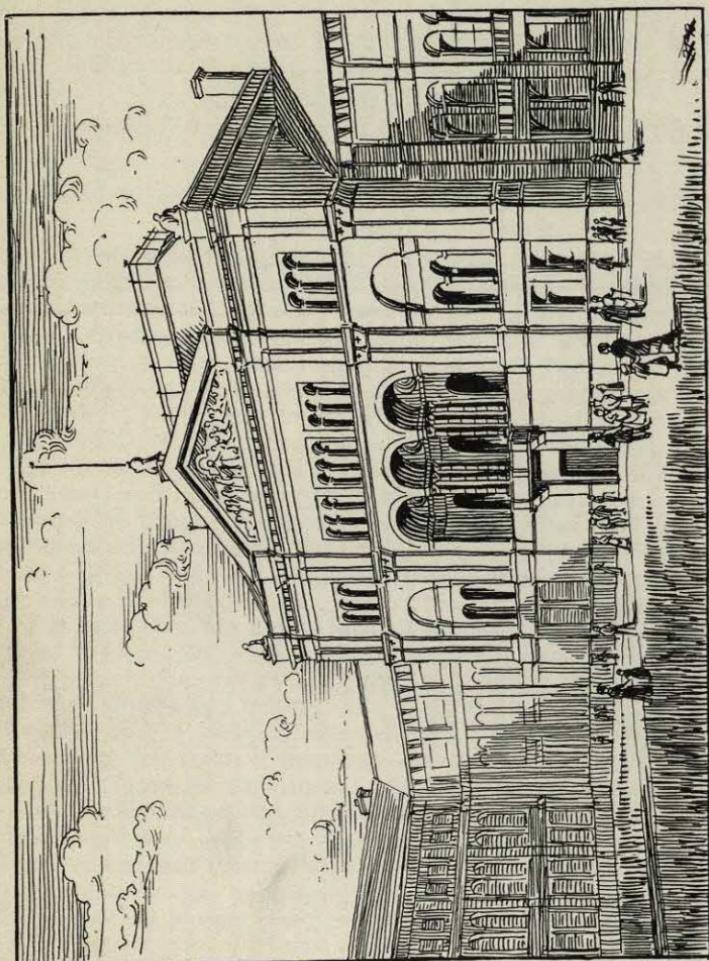
In 1855 twenty-nine masters of Schools of Art received grants of £10 each towards visiting the Paris Exhibition, and a number of successful students in the annual competition held at Gore House received grants of £8 each for the same purpose. In Dr. Playfair's report, issued about this period, he states that :

"The Department of Science and Art, in concert with the Committee of Council on Education, has enabled 1,044 teachers of public schools to learn drawing at the local Schools of Art with a view to introducing it into their schools."

Travelling museums in connection with the South Kensington Museum were organised in the following year, 1856, the first exhibition of this kind being held at Birmingham ; but in 1857 the activities of the school, or Department of Practical Art, as it was then called, were transferred from Marlborough House to South Kensington, and the responsibility transferred from the Board of Trade to the Committee of Council for Education.

VII.—THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

The Museum itself, a spacious building of iron and wood, had been erected near the site of the Great Exhibition of 1851, and consisted chiefly of a selection of objects left over from that Exhibition, the land, which cost £60,000, being purchased by Her Majesty's Commissioners out of the surplus funds of that undertaking. The Fine Art collections, which had been exhibited at Marlborough House since 1852,



THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, 1857
(Drawing made from an Old Print)



State-aided Art Training in England, 1837-1900

were removed to South Kensington, and Mr. Henry Cole was made its first director, the building being opened on 22nd June, 1857, as the South Kensington Museum. The erection of more permanent buildings was immediately commenced, and the Art Schools were placed at the rear of the main building, and are in use at the present time under the title of the Royal College of Art. It is generally acknowledged that the work of the Royal College is carried on in a building which is the least satisfactory of its kind of any in Europe. (See illustration facing page 60.)

The following article, taken from the *Art Journal* of 1857, is interesting :

"THE MUSEUM, AND SCHOOLS OF ART AND SCIENCE, AT SOUTH KENSINGTON.

"The Museum is being rapidly filled with objects of varied attraction—legacies from the '51 Exhibition hitherto warehoused in Kensington Palace, and other contributions of interest and instruction. Among these will be found the first steam-engine ever in action in this country—the little grandfather of all the great-grandchildren; also, we understand, Wren's original model for St. Paul's, belonging to the Dean and Chapter, a design differing considerably from the edifice actually erected—simpler in plan and character, and of one architectural order instead of two. It is of wood, and some twenty feet long. Rooms of access and refreshment are being erected close to Cromwell Road, and form an entrance to the Museum. Everything about the place is better than the original 'boilers,' which are now painted so as to look like an edifice of striped linen. They have evidently not known what to do with it. We should suggest an extensive wiring and growth of climbers over it to shade its eccentricities. There are some fine trees in the area in front, and the garden is being nicely dressed with shrubs and flowers, and, with the green mantle of summer, will have a pleasing effect enough. It will be Art and Science among the roses: a Brompton—we beg pardon—a South Kensington 'Grove of Academus.' It must be allowed, however, that the buildings altogether have a temporary character, with the exception of that erected for the Sheepshanks Collection, which is fireproof and substantial, and consists of a group of four well-proportioned rooms excellently lighted. Advantage has been taken of some old houses near, to convert them into offices and residences in connection with the schools that were removed from Marlborough House. These are convenient and well arranged, and afford excellent light and facilities for study. The Department has also lately taken possession of an outwork on the opposite side of Cromwell Road, in the shape of a house and garden, by means of a mine under the road. This has been some

South Kensington and its Art Training

of the day work of the corps of the 'Sappers' on the premises, whose broad red backs may, however, have been seen in the evening bending over the drawing boards of the schools, their owners being as intent as any other of the students in acquiring powers of the pencil. The training schools for masters are regularly and well attended, and the Museum itself is expected to be open very shortly to the public."

In 1859 the school is described as having as its "primary purpose the supplying of Art teachers to all places which seek to establish Art Schools," and students in training for teachers were sent to teach in London elementary schools as part of their course of work; also there appears to have been a diminution of the amount of work in design, as distinct from imitative Art, carried on in the school.

Some scepticism seems to have been expressed at this period of the school's history as to the manner of appointing inspectors of the various schools. The *Art Journal* of 1862, in a short article, states :

"We learn that another inspector, in addition to Messrs. Bowler and Wylde, has been recently appointed, the fortunate person being a Mr. Iselin, of whose name the world of Art is profoundly ignorant. Mr. Iselin is, as we have heard, a good classical and mathematical scholar, and took high rank at Cambridge; subsequently he filled creditably the post of mathematical master to the Stockwell Grammar School."

It is interesting to read in the *Quarterly Review*, 1863, how the first efforts in bringing the work of the Government Schools of Design into close touch with that of the South Kensington Museum were being made. The origin of the Museum was the outcome of the Exhibition of 1851, a building known as the "Brompton Boilers,"* the creation of Sir William Cubitt, being used for the purpose of storing the conglomeration of articles left over from that Exhibition.

Strange to say, much doubt was expressed as to the wisdom of the two institutions being carried on side by side.

The Museum at this period is described in the *Quarterly Review* as having "a goodly array of models of school buildings, barometers and blackboards, alphabets and magic lanterns, toys, pens, ink, paper, and school books all in a row."

The public were not pleased with the position of South Kensington as an educational centre, being too far from the purlieus of the Tower Hamlets. There were others who had

* So called from the appearance of the curved roofs of the building.

State-aided Art Training in England, 1837-1900

grave doubts as to the expediency of spending money on public institutions for the public recreation and instruction, and who could not understand the identification of a drawing school and a collection, or the reason why the British Museum was not enlarged and adapted to the growing tastes of the day, instead of being so directly confronted with a young suburban rival.

The important collection of specimens of Mediæval and Renaissance Art which was gradually being got together was in danger of being transferred to the British Museum, and South Kensington, it was suggested, should be left to fulfil what is spoken of as "the more humble but useful task of an educational instrument, with its casts and models, and bottled specimens of natural productions."

As it happened, the generous bequest to the nation of the Sheepshanks Collection, with the condition that they were to be displayed at South Kensington and nowhere else, saved any such transference being made.

Later, similar conditions in reference to the Vernon and Turner pictures made South Kensington absolutely safe as regards its position as an Art centre. New buildings were necessary for the housing of these pictures, and a Captain Fowke, R.E., was responsible for the building of the well-lit galleries in which they were placed.

It was suggested that a Ministry of Art and Science should be created, which would relieve the Council Office of its artistic duties, leaving it more to the matter-of-fact responsibilities of school teaching, in the person of a Parliamentary Under-Secretary, to answer questions and move estimates.

The craze that was gradually springing up for the close study and possession of specimens of the Art of the Middle Ages, of which South Kensington was becoming a storehouse, led to numerous exhibitions being arranged in the metropolis, notably one organised by the Ironmongers' Company, in which the treasures that were shown brought huge crowds and demonstrated that London was ripe for an Art Exhibition of a more permanent and systematic character.

VIII.—“WORKS OF ART ON LOAN” EXHIBITION.

Kensington was keen to add such treasures to its galleries, and a great “Works of Art on Loan” Exhibition was formed, and had a splendid result.

South Kensington and its Art Training

The collection got together was an epitome of the Art-history of Europe and of some portions of Asia for about fifteen hundred years.

The difficulty the managers of the Exhibition had to face was how to refuse exhibits.

The Crown, Universities, and civic bodies and private collectors found no valid prohibition restrained the temporary deportation of their most cherished heirlooms.

IX.—THE NATIONAL ART TRAINING SCHOOL.

The year 1863 marked the introduction of National Scholarships for industrial students and the changing of the name of the School to that of the National Art Training School, and national scholars educated as designers and ornamentists found little difficulty in obtaining remunerative employment.

Students were also being prepared for admittance to the Royal Academy Schools, and as many as twenty-two were admitted in the year 1869.

Further, in 1872 students were enabled to do practical* decorative work under the late Mr. Francis Moody, who was at that time employed upon the decoration of the new South Kensington Museum, the greater portion of the old iron building having been taken down and re-erected as a branch museum at Bethnal Green. The influence that Mr. Moody had on the Decorative Art of this period was very considerable, and his teaching had beneficial results.

The staff of the School was also a particularly strong one, as it included such well-known names as M. Jules Dalou and M. Alphonse Legros, with Mr. Redgrave as Principal and Mr. R. Burchett, Headmaster.

Many men now well known in the Art world passed through the schools as students about this period—notably Sir Hubert Herkomer, R.A., Sir Luke Fildes, R.A., Mr. George Clausen, R.A., and Mr. La Thangue, A.R.A.

The Committee of Council on Education was keen on

* Extract from letter addressed to the author in reference to this book :—

“ Champs Elysées,
“ Paris,

“ 14th Nov., 1912.

“ You have no doubt touched upon the old decorations and architecture of the Museum and their indebtedness to former Masters, National Scholars, etc. I hope that their preservation, which has been in jeopardy, is now being made secure.

“ ALAN S. COLE.”

State-aided Art Training in England, 1837-1900

creating public interest in the development of the Museum at South Kensington, and in the preface to a work published for that authority and entitled "The Industrial Arts" it is stated that :

" The main benefit to be expected from the public exhibition of such collections as that at South Kensington is a higher average of knowledge among people generally.

" Mental endowments, or what we usually call talent, belong in various degrees to all men; and rightly to teach, to guide, and, above all, to stimulate these is the great object of Art collections. For talent requires to be stimulated, excited and spurred on to work; genius, on the contrary, may call for guidance, may gain from exercise, but cannot, if it would, be idle."

The Art Library attached to the Museum was also serving a useful purpose, and already contained some seventy-five thousand volumes and twenty-five thousand prints and photographs.

In 1875 Mr. (now Sir) E. J. Poynter superseded Mr. Redgrave as Principal of the National Art Training School, and Mr. John Sparkes took over the position of Headmaster of the School in succession to Mr. Burchett, who had died.

In 1877 there were 780 students, mostly fee-paying, in attendance at the School, a number which was considered too large to allow those who intended to become teachers to be satisfactorily trained, and in 1882 the condition of award of a National Scholarship was considerably modified, to the effect that students who held such scholarship would be expected to return to practise in seats of manufacture.

Mr. Poynter retired in 1881 and was replaced by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Thomas Armstrong as Director. A year later Mr. H. H. Stannus was engaged on the staff as teacher of design, the number of students then in attendance having fallen to 621, which number was still further reduced to 426 in the year 1882, the cause of this decrease being the elimination of other than intending teachers from attendance at the School.

X.—ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART.

Nothing eventful appears to have happened from now until the year 1897, when the School was named the Royal College of Art in place of that of the National Art Training School, and a Diploma of Associateship was established. A year later Mr. Walter Crane was appointed Principal

South Kensington and its Art Training

of the College, both Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Sparkes having previously retired.

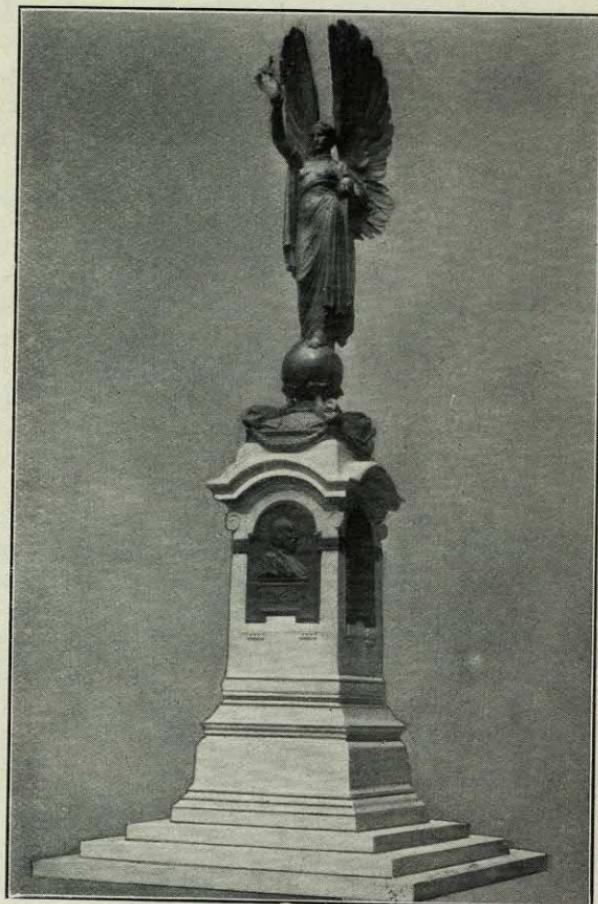
XI.—MR. WALTER CRANE.

Mr. Crane, after holding the Principalship for one year, retired, and the appointment of the present Principal, Mr. Augustus Spencer, led to a scheme being drawn up for its reorganisation, which was, as stated in the report of the Departmental Committee, that

"A Council of Art should be appointed, and that the School should return to its original purpose of the direct promotion of the study of design, and suggested the establishment of a definite course of study for design students, consisting of an elementary course in design for drawing, painting, and modelling, and 'special technical courses in the various branches of design, where an intimate knowledge of the conditions of handicrafts and manufactures could be acquired.'"

Mr. Crane became one of the newly formed Council on Art, which also consisted of Mr. (now Sir William) Richmond, R.A., Mr. T. G. Jackson, R.A., and Mr. Onslow Ford, R.A. Mr. Augustus Spencer has carried out the duties of Principal and organised the work of the College up to the present time with very successful results, as will be shown later. This brings us to the period under observation by the Departmental Committee on the Royal College of Art, 1900-10, to the consideration of which the next chapter is devoted.





MEMORIAL TO KING EDWARD VII. AT BRIGHTON AND HOVE

NEWBURY A. TRENT

CHAPTER II.

STATE-AIDED ART TRAINING IN ENGLAND, 1900-10.

I.—THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE.

A DEPARTMENTAL Committee, formed for the purpose of considering and reporting upon the functions and constitution of the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, and its relations to the Schools of Art in London and throughout the country, recently issued their report.*

A period of ten years, 1900-10, marking the introduction of the present régime, was selected, and upon this the Departmental Committee were to base their opinions and recommendations.

One would naturally surmise that the members of such a committee would consist of men who could lay claim to some special knowledge of the subject under consideration, who had gained actual experience in connection with the work being reviewed, and also that the position they occupied would enable them to give a free and authoritative opinion upon so important and national a subject as Art education.

It is to be regretted that such was not the case, as a perusal of the names of the members of the Committee will plainly show.

The constitution of the Committee was as follows†: Mr. E. K. Chambers (chairman), Mr. Douglas Cockerell, Sir Kenneth Anderson, K.C.M.G., Mr. Frank Warner, Professor F. Brown, Sir George Frampton, R.A., Mr. William Burton, M.A., F.C.S., Mr. Halsey Ricardo, F.R.I.B.A., and Sir Charles Holroyd, Hon. Litt.D.

* Report of the Departmental Committee on the Royal College of Art, published by Wyman & Sons, Fetter Lane, E.C. Price 6d.

† Portion of letter written by Mr. Walter Crane to *Times*:—

"The recent Departmental Committee on the Art Schools was mainly composed of men more or less hostile to the Government Art Schools and the Royal College of Art, but though the latter especially was accused of deficiency in practical relationship to the trade of the country, representatives of industrial design are conspicuous by their absence on the new Standing Committee, with the natural result that the new syllabus is more academic than ever."

South Kensington and its Art Training

The Chairman, Mr. E. K. Chambers, is the Principal Assistant Secretary of the *Technological Branch of the Board of Education, which department is responsible for issuing circulars, regulations for the conduct of classes, etc., to Schools of Art throughout the country. Of late years the meaning of the instructions to masters and students contained in these circulars has in many instances been extremely difficult to grasp. For instance, in September, 1911, a circular was issued to all Schools of Art under the Board of Education stating the examinations that were to be held in 1912; at the same time it contained the information that the successes of students in these examinations would probably be useless, as fresh arrangements were to be made for the following session, 1912-13. The Technological Branch is also responsible for the present system of registration of students' attendances in Schools of Art, a system that has received general condemnation among educational authorities and Art masters throughout the country, and which tends to ruin the effectiveness of Art instruction in many schools. Mr. Chambers has edited numerous books, including "English Pastorals," Donne's Poems, Vaughan's Poems, and "Early English Lyrics." But these facts do not improve one's opinion as to the wisdom of the choice made of the chairman of a Committee on Art Education and its relation to Manufactures.

Professor F. Brown, a member of the Committee, occupies the position of Slade Professor of Fine Art, London University. The Slade School, as it is termed, is in many respects a rival institution to the Royal College of Art, which is proved by the fact that its students are in general competition for posts as teachers, etc., with students from

* From the leading article in *The Schoolmaster* (the official organ of the National Union of Teachers, edited by Sir James Yoxall, M.P.), 11th May, 1912:

"Could anything be more preposterous, unjustifiable, mischievous, stultifying, and angering? Yes; the Board of Education's management of its 'T' branch† as a whole. Delay, circumlocution, contradiction, issue of circulars, only to be withdrawn, registration regulations, 'model' registers, the selection of individuals for the Committee of Advice for Art—the statistics of the Report on the Royal College of Art—all seem to be so wrong, all seem to be so badly managed, that one might almost suspect an intention to grit the wheels, irritate the local administrators, confuse and paralyse the teachers, and bring the whole Art School system to wreck and ruin. Of course there can be no such intelligent intention. What is it, then? Could anything be more disastrous? Yes; the predominant and persistent idea of education which has caused all the difficulties of the Board of Education during late years."

† Technological Branch.



FIGURE (8 ft. high), ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE, STRAND
JAMES A. STEVENSON



State-aided Art Training in England, 1900-10

the South Kensington schools. The selection, therefore, of Professor Brown was an unwise one.

Mr. William Burton, M.A., F.C.S., is well known as an authority on the scientific side of the manufacture of pottery. He has published "The Use of Lead Compounds in Pottery," "English Porcelain," etc., and came very prominently before the public in connection with the Royal Commission on Lead Poisoning in the Potteries. The manufacturers and workers in the Pottery districts found that the evidence he gave before the Royal Commission did them a very valuable service in helping to elucidate the difficult problem with which they were faced.

Some of the other members of the Committee are well known in the positions they occupy in the world of Fine Art, but their knowledge of what the Committee termed "the fundamental part of their enquiry," that of design for manufacturing purposes, is naturally of a somewhat lesser order.

It is also a very noticeable fact that in the constitution of this Committee the Government Schools of Art were unrepresented, and forces one to the conclusion that a serious blunder was made by those responsible for the formation of the Committee in asking them to perform the task placed before them.

To discuss or dispute the findings of so unrepresentative a committee would, in the ordinary sense, be a waste of time and useless in its purpose, but the publication of their Report necessitates a reply being given to some of the statements made, more especially as their recommendations were based on false information presented to them.*

* See letter to *Times* dated 30th July, 1912:—

"THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART AND THE SCHOOLS OF ART.
"To the Editor of the TIMES.

"SIR,—The report of a Committee appointed some year or two ago to inquire into the working of the Royal College of Art has been used by various serious thinkers and speakers, like Mr. Reginald Blomfield, A.R.A., as an authoritative document; and in the sense of its being a publication by the Board of Education it is one. But it fails as an authoritative document containing accurate statistics. Those which were placed before the Committee conveyed an impression that, of some 450 students who had passed lately through the College courses, 32 only had made 'the practice of Art in any form their livelihood'; while 136 other students had become teachers, 230 were returned 'occupations unknown.' With such figures before them the Committee were led to a general conclusion that the College had failed. It has transpired that the number of students whose occupations in connection with the applied or other arts cannot be accounted for is not 230, but about 27 or 28 out of the total of 450. I have not been able to find that, since the publication in

South Kensington and its Art Training

It was, then, only the natural outcome of things that various writers should have also made the publication of the Report an opportunity to condemn the work carried on at South Kensington, entirely on the strength of the fictitious figures contained in that document. In an article contained in the columns of the *Star*, and signed by Mr. A. J. Finberg, we read the following enlightening statements :

" That the system of Art education now in vogue in this country is defective and wasteful is readily admitted on all hands. At a great expense of time, money and men, the Board of Education trains thousands of young students to do all sorts of things that nobody wants them to do or will ever pay them for doing. One instance of the misdirection of energy involved in the present system will speak for itself. In the ' Report of the Departmental Committee on the Royal College of Art ' issued this year it is stated that *459 students had been trained* in the college during a period of ten years. Out of these only *32* have made the practice of Art in any form their livelihood, while *126* earn their living as teachers. The Parliamentary inquiry into the working of the English Art Schools seems an admission that the widespread dissatisfaction with the present state of things is justified, and it is probable that *the whole system of English Art Education may shortly be thrown into the melting-pot*. The very thoughtful and able little book which Mr. C. R. Ashbee has just published, through Mr. B. T. Batsford, under the title ' Should We Stop Teaching Art? ' (price 3s. 6d. net), comes therefore just at the right time, and should prove a most useful and valuable contribution to the understanding of the subject. . . . His appeal is not alone to architects and painters; he deals with the question mainly from the point of view of national education as a whole. As he says in his preface : ' I offer what seems to me to be a way out of

1911 of the report, any correction has been issued of the statistics contained in it.

" Earlier this year I elsewhere submitted that ' it is obviously good to consider and discuss how the usefulness of the Royal College of Art within a well-defined scope may be developed ' ; but I pleaded, and still plead, that such consideration and discussion should not be misled by inaccurate statistics.

" A scheme which was adopted about 1901 for reorganising the College was framed by a Council of Art consisting of Mr. T. G. Jackson, R.A., Sir William Richmond, R.A., the late Mr. Onslow Ford, R.A. (who was succeeded by Sir Thomas Brock, R.A.), and Mr. Walter Crane. That Council met many times. Has Mr. Blomfield considered this careful and far-reaching scheme, and its results and their effect in relation to the work of the Art Schools throughout the country ?

" I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

" ALAN S. COLE.

" The Athenaeum,
" 27th July."



HEAD, CARVED IN MARBLE
JAMES A. STEVENSON



State-aided Art Training in England, 1900-10

the difficulty that confronts our schools under the conditions imposed on them by Mechanism, and in so doing I want to fix attention upon the challenge implied in the title of this work, "Should We Stop Teaching Art?"'

"Mr. Ashbee's general attitude towards the present state of things may be fairly summarised by his remarks on the statistics given above: '*That only 32 students at the Royal College of Art out of 459 have been able to earn a livelihood by the practice of Art in any form* proves that, with the exception of architecture, book and newspaper illustration, and a few other occupations, economic independence in the Arts has been undermined by machinery. But,' he continues, 'the fact that out of *459 students 126 earn their living* by teaching is an even more damaging criticism of the system; for it means the perpetuation of a type of teacher—the "Art school master"—who is divorced from the actual conditions of life, and often teaches what he does not practise. It is one of the bitter reflections in modern industrial Art how many good craftsmen are turned into Art school masters, and give up their craft as a consequence. Yet they jump at the chance because it gives them a better livelihood. In other words, the State at present endows a specific form of teacher whose work is of very questionable benefit, while all the time the "genuine article," so to speak, the bona-fide craftsman with artistic training and skill, the maker of beautiful things whom the State is trying to produce, is discouraged from continuing his work.'"

The cheapness of the attack on the Art School master (especially as Mr. Ashbee had such "excellent" figures in support of his opinions) can be read and passed over without comment, except that such statements make one wonder whether he (Mr. Ashbee) ever found it necessary to receive any Art training himself. It is like the child scolding its mother for a pupil to despise his tutor. Critics of Mr. Ashbee's type are perhaps "born," not made. The teaching profession is a sufficiently arduous one, and Art masters, like all others, usually occupy their posts through their own merits.

II.—THE FICTITIOUS FIGURES.

As stated in the first part of this chapter, the period which was under review, 1900-10, marked the introduction of a system of training students in Art which can be plainly seen has not yet had time to prove its merits or defects; but the system has undoubtedly justified a continuance of its aims and policy by the convincing success of students trained during that period after having left the College.

A list of 459 students who had attended the Royal College

South Kensington and its Art Training

of Art during the period 1900-10, together with full particulars as to their progress while at the College and their subsequent occupations, was supplied to the Committee as a basis for their observations and as an aid to their deliberations.

It is very unfortunate that the compilation of these figures should have been so grossly inaccurate,* especially as they placed the result of the training in a very adverse light.

I cannot but think that if the Board of Education realised the great harm which these inaccurate statistics inflict upon ex-students of the College they would at once remedy the evil by publishing a corrected list of appointments.

The information supplied to the Committee and contained in the Appendix to the Departmental Committee's Report is as follows :

Table B.

SUBSEQUENT OCCUPATIONS OF STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED DURING THE
PERIOD 1900-10.

Those who became Teachers, Designers, etc.	Not known.	Total.
229	230	459

In a letter to *The Times*,† dated 7th November, 1911, it was pointed out how entirely wrong and misleading these particulars were; they should have been :

Those who became Teachers, Designers, etc.	Not known.	Total.
402	57	459

It should also be borne in mind that the fifty-seven students who are placed under the heading of "unknown" in the latter table of particulars were mainly persons of independent means, among whom Sir John Gorst is a

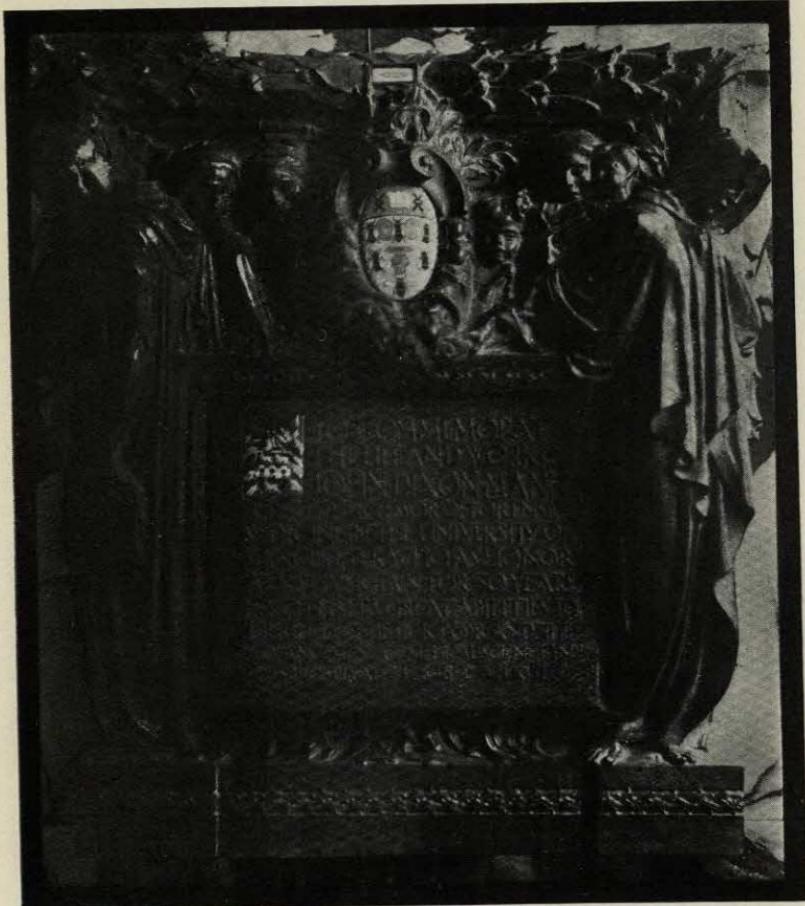
* The following will give some idea of the way the Board of Education compiled its "telling" statistics. In the Appendix to the Report of the Departmental Committee Messrs. A. E. Martin, A. R. Smith, and G. R. Woolway are placed among the "unknowns," and consequently go to swell the number of those who have failed to "earn a livelihood by the practice of Art in any form." As a matter of fact, these three gentlemen were, and two still are, in the Board's own employ as instructors in the Royal College of Art itself! Another instructor, Mr. E. W. Tristram, is put down as being at Clapham.

† The following is the text of the letter to the *Times* :—

"THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART.

"To the Editor of the TIMES.

"SIR,—In the leading article contained in your valuable paper dated 5th September, on the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Royal College of Art, it is remarked of the number of students who attend that Institution that so few should be successful in gaining any



MEMORIAL TABLET IN BRONZE AT SALFORD ROYAL HOSPITAL
GORDON M. FORSYTH



State-aided Art Training in England, 1900-10

conspicuous example, who had found no need to continue their Art studies for the purpose of forming a means of livelihood; it also included those students who had since taken up their work, or were pursuing their studies abroad, and with whom it was difficult to get into touch, so as to define their position in the Art world.

A more detailed summary of the subsequent occupations of the 402 successful students who attended the Royal College of Art during the period 1900-10 is contained in the following table (the figures contained in the Appendix to the Departmental Committee's Report are placed at the side of the table for comparison):

SUBSEQUENT OCCUPATIONS OF STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED DURING THE PERIOD 1900-10.

	Actual figures.	The Board of Education figures.
Those who became Whole-time Teachers	147	126
Those who became Designers and Craftsmen	137	26
Those who became Teachers also doing Trade Work	102	7
Those who were Exhibitors in 1909 (not being Teachers)	5	64
Those who became Artists and Sculptors	11	6
Not known	57	230
Totals.....	459	459

appointment for which their training at the Royal College has prepared them.

"The list of students in the Appendix to the Blue Book issued gives 459 names of internal students who attended during the period 1900-10, of whom 230 only are shown as having entered upon subsequent occupations. We are anxious to point out that the list as prepared by the Board of Education is seriously incomplete, as out of the total of 459 students no less than 400 can be traced as having secured appointments, and are actively engaged upon work towards which their training at the Royal College was directed. Thus the conclusions based upon the misleading figures in this report are of no value. We, being among those students of the Royal College of Art during the period 1900-10 whose occupations are not given in the list, append our signatures, and wish to emphasise our great appreciation of the course of study we were privileged to follow.

"We are of opinion that the present régime has not yet had a fair test, for none of the students who completed a full course of study under it have been away from the College of Art longer than five years, a short period in which to prove, in any large measure, the value of their training.

"Yours faithfully,

"FRANK P. BROWN.

"W. S. GEORGE.

"MALCOLM OSBORNE.

"A. R. SMITH.

"J. A. STEVENSON."

South Kensington and its Art Training

III.—SUCCESSES OF STUDENTS.

When we realise that 90 per cent. of these 459 students who attended during the period 1900-10 secured occupations enabling them to earn their livelihood by Art work, we must confess that the training they received was a very satisfactory one.

It would be interesting to see what figures a similar analysis of the subsequent careers of students who had attended other Art training institutions would produce. The result would be only to emphasise the usefulness of the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, as a training ground for teachers, sculptors, painters, designers, etc., and for every branch of work connected with the arts.

When the South Kensington student enters into open competition with students from other Art training institutions, clubs, etc., he generally succeeds in taking his full share in the awards that are made.

In the Gilbert Garrett Competition, held annually and open to all London sketching clubs, the South Kensington Sketching Club (Royal College of Art) has received the "AWARD OF HONOUR" for the past seven years in succession.

This distinction goes to the club which in the opinion of the judges (usually four members of the Royal Academy) shows the best general level of work from among its members.

In open competition for the British Institution Scholarships 24 have been won by students of the Royal College of Art during the past ten years.

The awards gained during the same period in the annual competitions organised by the Royal Institute of British Architects include the following :

Soane Medallion, 1906.

Owen Jones Studentship, 1905-7-8-10-11-12.

Silver Medal (Essay), 1912.

Silver Medal (Drawings), 1906-9.

Tite Prize, 1911.

Grissell Prize, 1910.

Abroad we find further evidence of success following their training at South Kensington. In the "Royal College of

State-aided Art Training in England, 1900-10

Art Students' Magazine"** for February of the present year we find that one student who had just left the College to study at the Académie Julian, Paris, was awarded first prize in the *concours* for "Dessin," in January first prize and medal in the painting *concours* "Torse Femme," besides five other mentions for drawing and painting, and also mention for "Esquisse."

Another student had the previous year been awarded first prize and medal for "Portrait" and also "Esquisse." The writer of the article further states: "The students of the painting school of the Royal College of Art are leaving their mark in such an artistic centre as Paris; this is very pleasing, as a good many Englishmen are studying over there with rather an outdated antipathy for South Kensington. When will they awaken?"

* Edited by Mr. John Adams, a student of the Royal College, and published monthly at the Students' Common Room, Royal College of Art, South Kensington.

CHAPTER III.

THE REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE, 1900-10.

I.—ON THE STAFF AND CURRICULUM OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART.

IN paragraph 6 of the "Report of the Departmental Committee on the Royal College of Art" certain statements are made and conclusions arrived at which, it is necessary to point out, are apt to create a wrong impression on the mind of the ordinary reader, and, further, may be described as without the usual foundation of fact. It is stated with reference to the Principal of the Royal College (Mr. Augustus Spencer) that

"We gathered from him (the Principal) that he made it his business to enter into personal and friendly relations with the students. The impression, however, that we derived from some at least of the ex-students whom we questioned was that the Principal was largely occupied in the administrative business of the College, and was not in close touch with the students, and that it was the Professors rather than the Principal to whom the students looked for personal help and counsel."

It is unfortunate that the choice made of ex-students to give evidence before the Departmental Committee was not of a more representative character. In the minds of really representative students the foregoing statement made in the Report amounts almost to a libel, and it is a curious fact, in view of the figures which were quoted in the preceding chapter as to the general success of the main body of students, that not one of the seven ex-students who were called before the Committee obtained any distinction while at the College, or had occupied any responsible position* (i.e., headmaster of a School of Art), which would have enabled him to put the results of his training to a practical test, after having completed his studies at the College. Three out of the seven students had not

* The author's observations throughout this Chapter are based upon his 20 years' experience and actual acquaintance with matters relating to Art education and design for manufactures, carried on under the Board of Education and with important manufacturing firms (Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, Ltd., etc.) respectively. Five years (1902-7) out of this period were spent as a student at the Royal College of Art.



“BACCHUS AND SILENUS”
(Exhibited at the Royal Academy)

H. A. BUDD



The Report of the Departmental Committee

secured the diploma of Associateship, the chief hall-mark of a successful period of training and study.

When it is proved that 402 out of 459 students who attended the College for instruction during the period 1900-1910 secured posts after completing their course of training (to a great extent through the personal energies of the Principal, in addition to their general qualifications), the facts, of course, speak for themselves.

Continuing in the same paragraph, the Report states that

"To some extent the Principal appears to be in relations with schools and manufacturers, and to assist students in obtaining employment at the end of their course."

If the correct figures as to the subsequent occupations of students who had been trained at the College had been placed before the Committee, the foregoing statement would possibly have been altered, so as to read :

"To a great extent the Principal appears to be," etc.

The next paragraph in the Report mentions that

"The Professors and the Instructors in Etching and Engraving and in the crafts have been wisely chosen from amongst artists of high reputation and achievement in their respective branches."

It appears to have been difficult for the Committee to offer any adverse criticism as regards these officials,* except that they did not think it advisable that professors should be allowed to undertake work in itself of the nature of teaching or of educational organisation outside the College. In the principle involved (that of enabling students to see and assist in professional work undertaken by the professors) they, however, fully concurred.

The Report proceeds with various criticisms of the curriculum and the methods of training students as carried out by the Principal and the Professors of the College.

It is here necessary to point out that the main objects of the College during the period under review by the Departmental Committee were :

1. The training of designers, painters, sculptors, and architects for the particular branch of work in which they chose to specialise.
2. The training of teachers for the Government Schools of Art in London and throughout the provinces.

* Professors at the Royal College of Art, 1900-10 :—Design : Professor W. R. Lethaby, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.; Architecture : Professor A. B. Pite, F.R.I.B.A.; Painting : Professor G. E. Moira; Modelling : Professor E. Lantéri.

South Kensington and its Art Training

To follow out this idea the work of the College was divided into four separate departments—namely, the schools of Architecture, Painting, Design, and Sculpture. A student entering the College and intending to become an Art master would be required to spend at least one term out of a four or a five years' course of training in each of the four schools, and for the remainder of the period to specialise in any one school, before being allowed to sit for the full diploma of Associateship of the College. This would entitle him to act in the position of headmaster of a School of Art organised for the training of students and for grant-earning purposes under the Board of Education.

In the Committee's criticism of the merits of these individual schools and of their Professors they appear to have overlooked the object and results of this combined system of training, where students who go through each school are enabled to grasp, in a short period, the main principles of these four sub-divisions of study, and who are then able to specialise, with advantage, in the particular school to which their abilities have been found to be most suitable. This system of Art students' training has been highly praised by the foreign Press and many authorities on Art education.

M. Paul Colin, Inspector to L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, is at present engaged in an attempt to introduce the principle of the College course into that well-known school. He has described it as a "University course,"* and lavished upon it the highest praise. The debates at the International Drawing Congress had shown "that it is unique in Europe."

In a specially written article on the Royal College of Art contained in the issue of the *Daily Telegraph* dated 27th March, 1911, it is stated :

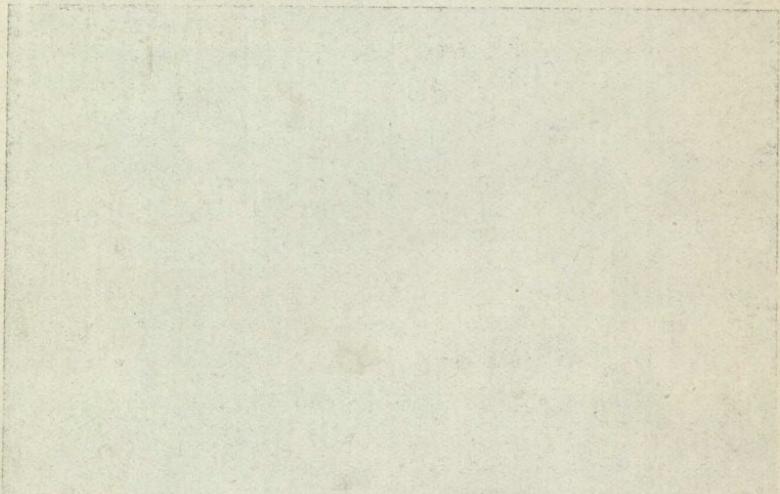
"Professor Ludwig Pallat, delegate of the Prussian Ministry of Education, wrote in *Die Werkekunst* that the exhibits of the College were 'a remarkable testimony to the high state of artistic education in England.' Dr. Nadler, director of the Budapest School of Art, one of the most important schools in Austria-Hungary, after making a tour of Europe, said that the Royal College at South Kensington, though housed in class-rooms the most unsuitable he had seen in any capital city, was 'organised on the soundest lines for influencing the Art industries of the country.' After a similar tour the director of the school at Amsterdam recommends the Royal College of Art as a model for reorganising the Government school there.

* See article signed Keighley Snowden in *Daily Chronicle*, 14th September, 1911.



"TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP" COMPOSITION

LAURENCE PRESTON



The Report of the Departmental Committee

"In view of these opinions and of the success achieved, it is felt that the integrity of the Royal College of Art should be preserved. The vigilance of foreign criticism, and the rapid growth of art industries, both at home and abroad, render the appointment of a Royal Commission desirable, it is added, on general grounds of capital importance to the prosperity of the nation; for there is not in England, as there is in some Continental countries, a systematic co-ordination of graduated training in Art with a view to industrial needs."

In the preceding column of the same issue of that valuable paper the following text of a memorial which had been submitted to the Prime Minister was inserted:

"SIR,—We, the undersigned, understanding that a departmental committee is now considering the constitution of the Royal College of Art and its relations with the Art Schools of the country, respectfully urge :

"1. That before any scheme for reorganising the Royal College of Art is proceeded with which would affect its present constitution or its relation to national Art education, a Royal Commission should be appointed to take into consideration the co-ordination of the methods of Art education pursued by different bodies, aided by public funds or otherwise, throughout the country.

"2. That the educational purpose of the national collection of Art treasures in the Victoria and Albert Museum is in danger of being forgotten.

"This collection was begun in 1851, at the instance of the late Prince Consort, as an adjunct to the School of Design (now the Royal College of Art), in order that students, while being trained in accuracy, both of hand and eye, should be within easy reach of treasures of Art which would cultivate their taste and stimulate their own sense of design.

"The museum now contains a collection of examples of the finest periods of Art, which no other country in the world can equal. The advantages which the Royal College of Art enjoys are therefore unique, and the existing close connection between the college and the museum should be strengthened by every possible means.

"3. That since, as is well known, British manufacturers no longer enjoy that superiority in machinery which almost amounted to monopoly during the middle part of the last century, and that other countries are now as well equipped in this respect as we are, success must, in future, mainly depend upon the tasteful use to which machinery can be put.

"4. That, in view of the great developments in industrial Art and industrial Art institutions in the United States of America, Germany and other foreign countries, as well as in British Colonies, since the death of the late Prince Consort, the whole

South Kensington and its Art Training

question of Art education has now reached a stage at which it is imperative, in the interests of the nation, that it should be dealt with by a comprehensive inquiry conducted by Royal Commission.

"Your obedient servants,

“(Signed) WALTER CRANE	ERNEST CROFTS
JOHN BELCHER	J. J. SHANNON
FRANK DICKSEE	JOHN S. SARGENT
SOLOMON J. SOLOMON	(SIR) HUBERT VON HERKOMER
DAVID MURRAY	W. ROBERT COLTON
T. G. JACKSON	(SIR) L. ALMA-TADEMA
(SIR) EDWARD J. POYNTER	J. W. WATERHOUSE
R. NORMAN SHAW	SEYMOUR LUCAS
(SIR) W. GOSCOMBE JOHN	(SIR) ALFRED EAST
BERTRAM MACKENNAL	(SIR) THOS. BROCK
(SIR) ERNEST A. WATERLOW	EDWIN A. ABBEY
(SIR) ERNEST GEORGE	(SIR) LUKE FILDERS
ANDREW C. GOW	GEORGE CLAUSEN.”
HAMO THORNYCROFT	
WALTER W. OULESS	

Yet, notwithstanding these open and well-expressed opinions, it happens that “outsiders” think fit to plunge into the controversy by reading papers before Art Societies on the subject of “State-aided Art Training,” of which the latest views are those expressed by Mr. Reginald Blomfield, F.R.I.B.A., who is a member of the New Council of Advice on Art. When reading a paper before a meeting of the National Society of Art Masters, on 26th July, 1912, at the South Kensington Museum, Mr. Blomfield, in his opening sentences, frankly admitted that he approached the subject with *great trepidation*, and asked the members present at that meeting to accept his statements as an honest attempt to “clear the air.” It has proved an instance of an architect stepping in “where angels fear to tread.” The National Society of Art Masters are to blame for this unwise selection of a lecturer for their annual meeting. Being inexperienced in Art teaching, Mr. Blomfield, like so many others, fastened on to the statistics contained in the Report of the Departmental Committee, which, as everyone connected with Art teaching by then knew, was a collection of fictitious figures that had been proved totally wrong and misleading (see letter to *Times*, page 23). Mr. Blomfield stated that the efforts of seventy years in the training of designers had resulted in failure, and suggested that State-aided Art training should be confined to the producers of articles of commerce, and giving a technical training to talented

The Report of the Departmental Committee

students. He went on to suggest that the schools should get rid of the incompetent "amateurs," whom, he stated, the country spends a great deal of money upon training to no purpose whatever, and also upon those teachers whose life is spent for the most part in instructing them. He further suggested that the first question which should be considered was whether the State should encourage the production of patterns for mechanical production at all, which he considered obstacles to the growth of any taste in "fine art." Mr. Blomfield added that instruction in the smaller schools should be limited to "drawing and modelling." There is a touch of humour in this remark which makes one wonder where the teaching of "drawing and modelling" ends. Ruskin says: "The teaching of Art is the teaching of all things," and it perhaps follows that "the ability to draw is the end of all *Art training*," but only the *beginning* of *Art education*. After the student has mastered that difficulty, he can then only express himself according to his own individuality, and not at the dictation of any Art master.

Where, then, would Mr. Blomfield "draw the line"? The "incompetent amateur" whom he despises may become an "accomplished artist," and in the event of a student of this type applying for admission to a State-aided institution, why should he be refused admission?

There are "amateurs" in almost every vocation who can number among themselves many prodigies who may later on occupy exalted positions, as others of that type have done, not only in the "aesthetic" walks of life, but in utilitarian spheres.

It was, then, only a natural consequence that Mr. Blomfield's statements should have received some scathing comments in the Press at the hands of those who are really acquainted with what the results of State-aided Art training, as carried on at South Kensington, have produced. The following letter, which appeared in the columns of *The Times* a few weeks after Mr. Blomfield read the paper referred to, is extremely interesting, and can at once be said to express the true facts of the case:

"' STATE-AIDED ART TRAINING IN ENGLAND ' AND ITS RESULTS.

" To the Editor of the TIMES.

" SIR,—We always seem to be busy in this country pulling things up by the roots to see how they are getting on, and this is especially a favourite sport where Art education is concerned.

South Kensington and its Art Training

"The whole question of State-aided Art training is again hurtling in the air; and I see my friend Mr. Reginald Blomfield has dashed into this much-discussed and complex question with his usual courage and ardour.

"His suggestions and your comments induce me to offer a few remarks, if they may be allowed to one who can look back over thirty years' work more or less in connection with Art education.

"To critics of our present system a very definite answer is afforded by the exhibitions now open at South Kensington—I mean that of the national competition of the works of the students of our State-aided schools and that of the Royal College of Art; the former housed in a temporary iron building known as Block C (that Sahara of South Kensington sheds between Queen's Gate and Exhibition Road), the latter in the inconvenient, insanitary, and also temporary building at the back of the old College of Science.

"Before lightly condemning the present system it would be only fair to at least look at what the schools have produced. I assert that both these displays contain very remarkable and beautiful work—work of which any country might be proud, and work which I greatly doubt could be equalled in any other country at present.

"Here we find work in architecture, painting and modelling and design in various materials and for various crafts. Owing to the vitalising influence of the revived study and practice in the artistic handicrafts the progress made in the schools (as a glance over the National Competition Exhibitions and those of the Royal College of Art in recent years would show) has been enormous.

"It is only fair to judge by the best and not by the worst. There must always be many failures to one success, but success is built on failure. But when you speak of 'failure,' is it failure to meet the demands of ordinary trade, or failure to train accomplished students? This leads to the question: Which is the proper business of an Art School? I do not hesitate to say that the taste of the Art Schools in design is always higher than the current trade taste. Ought we, then, to degrade the taste of the schools to the ordinary trade standard? Our trade seems to thrive on constant fluctuations of taste, rapid changes of fashion, constantly varying ideas of beauty. Is it the business of an Art School to follow these and supply our manufacturers with 'cheap labour'? Competition alone prevents our manufacturers from making use of the Art Schools. Rivals could do the same. It pays better to get suggestions from the Continent and train their own designers.

"I doubt, therefore, if the cry heard in some quarters that the Schools of Art should be brought into direct relation with the industries of the country in this sense is quite a sincere one, but it sounds well.



SKETCH FOR FRESCO AT CHELSEA TOWN HALL

(£200 Selected Design)
GEORGE R. WOOLWAY

The Report of the Departmental Committee

"The recent Departmental Commission on the Art Schools was mainly composed of men more or less hostile to the Government Art Schools and the Royal College of Art, but though the latter especially was accused of deficiency in practical relationship to the trade of the country, representatives of industrial design are conspicuous by their absence on the new Standing Committee, with the natural result that the new syllabus is more academic than ever!

"Mr. Blomfield would limit the ordinary Art Schools to teaching, drawing and modelling, and only give facilities for specializing in crafts in central ones, as a cure for imperfect training.

"But the grievance is rather that able and well-trained students cannot find the work they were trained to do on leaving the Art School or the Royal College of Art. There is an apparent hopeless disparity of aim between the artist and art-master on the one hand, and the trade and the public on the other. And yet the supremacy and originality of English decorative design has been acknowledged throughout Europe. In your article you raise the question whether the designing of patterns for mechanical reproduction is a proper aim or subject to be taught in our Art Schools, and also whether 'such patterns, however well designed, are not in themselves obstacles to the growth of any fine taste in Art'! Surely the history of textile design is both fine and splendid, and contains as beautiful Art as is to be found in any branch?

"You are most unfair to the Royal College of Art, which, quite apart from this section of its work, could afford to rest its reputation upon its modelling and its etching and engraving section alone, of which a most excellent display is now to be seen in one of the rooms of the College.

"The fact is the public do not know (and possibly do not really care) what excellent work is produced by the students of our State-aided schools, and the Government, strangely enough, apparently wish to keep the results as obscure as possible when they house these important exhibitions in such inconvenient and remote places, and while providing Science with magnificent buildings and up-to-date fittings, condemn Art to temporary buildings and an over-heated atmosphere—on the supposition perhaps that it is a sort of exotic and not a native growth!

"I think we put too much upon the Board of Education, which, in addition to the vast work of ordinary education, is expected to look after the museums and the Art Schools. Much could be said for a separate (but not necessarily water-tight) Art Department, as well as a Museums Board.

"I am, yours faithfully,

"WALTER CRANE."

NOTE.—Since the correspondence in the *Times* on the Royal College of Art we hear that it is proposed to abolish the National Competition, also the awards of medals and prizes to successful students, and instead thereof

South Kensington and its Art Training

a committee is to select and inspect the work of the schools locally, as I understand.

Now I have always thought that in the National Competition we have the great advantage of being able to set a standard of work before the whole country on this plan. The work of the students of all the Schools of Art in the country has been sent up to South Kensington, where it has been classified and arranged for examination; and independent and well-known artists and craftsmen, specialists in their own arts, but unconnected with the schools, have been invited to select the best specimens in each class of work, which included the whole range of study carried on in the Art Schools, from the designing of surface pattern and decorative design and handicraft of all kinds to drawing and painting from the life, including modelling and architecture. It has been the custom to award gold, silver, and bronze medals and book prizes to the most meritorious works in the opinion of the different sets of judges—not less than three in each class, who wrote reports on the work before them. It is difficult to see how a fairer system could be devised for obtaining a disinterested and competent artistic judgment upon the work of the schools, and the results were always shown at South Kensington, although, it must be confessed, in a rather obscure way. Still, the public was given the opportunity of seeing the results of the teaching, and the Art masters of the country could compare the work of one school with another, and see wherein their own might be deficient.

The educational value and usefulness of such a method must be sufficiently obvious, but how it can be efficiently replaced or what equivalents are proposed as substitutes does not appear.

The question of medals and prizes may be a more open one, though we are assured by experienced Art masters of the value of the stimulus the chance of winning such awards gives to students, and the encouragement to healthy emulation in the schools.

Perhaps a better means of encouraging capable students would be for the Government to purchase their best works, as has been occasionally done, from time to time, or offer some definite work of decoration in a public building to be competed for—say, mural decoration for public school walls—the judges and directors of such work to be artists of acknowledged position.

At all events, any National system of Art teaching can only be complete if some efficient means are available whereby a comparison of the work of the Art Schools can be made, and above all a standard of accomplishment maintained.

It is to be hoped that the present advisers of the Board of Education are fully aware of the importance of these considerations.

The question of Art teaching is, however, so vast and complex a subject that it appears to me we need a special department to deal with it.

W. C.

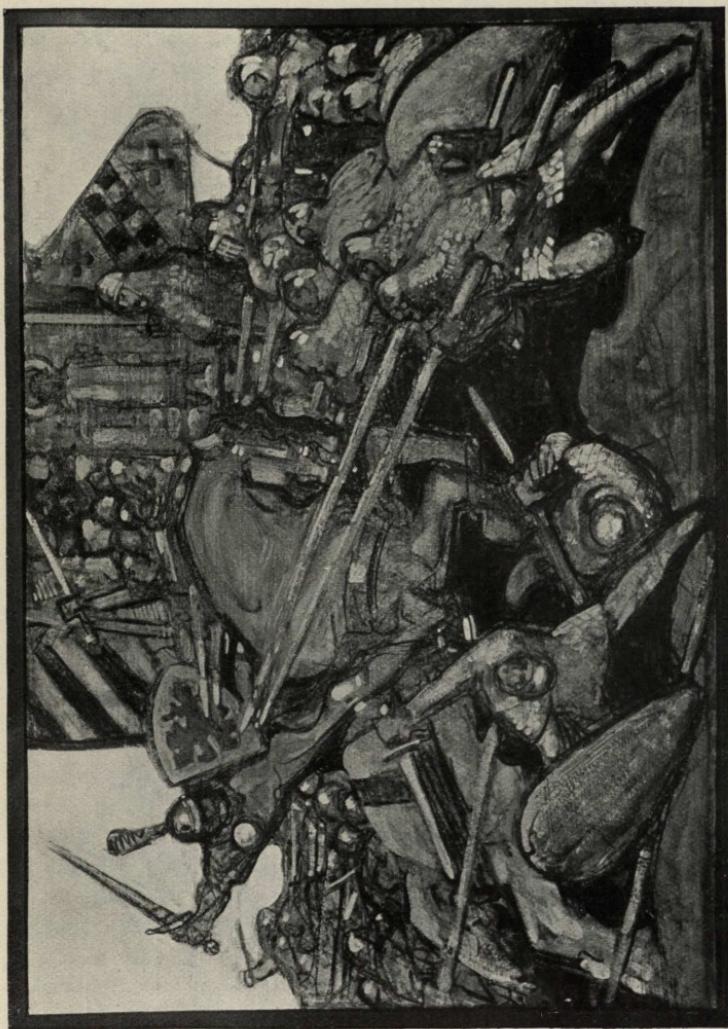
II.—ON THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS.

It seems strange, therefore, in the light of such outside criticism as that referred to, to read in the Departmental Committee's Report that

“ It is, indeed, no longer the case that the College is the source of the teaching supply so exclusively as it has been during some periods of its history.”

This remark was evidently inspired by the fictitious figures that have already been quoted in Chapter II. of this book, and which evidently again misled the Committee in their views on the subject placed before them for discussion.

It is a fact that, at the present moment, the supply is not



“FREDERICK I. DEFEATED AT LAGUÉRO”
LANCELOT CRANE



The Report of the Departmental Committee

equal to the demand for College-trained teachers for the Government Schools of Art throughout the country. In one Yorkshire town (Leeds) no less than eight College-trained men of the period 1900-10 have been engaged by the local education authority to assist in directing the Art work carried on in the schools of that district. Again, many of the students of the same period are already holding positions as headmasters of important Schools of Art, whilst those principals of schools who received their Art training at South Kensington anterior to the period 1900-10 are keen on securing the services of the later men on their staffs, as they have found that their abilities as teachers are of an advanced order, and that their teaching produces very satisfactory results. Had the constitution of the Departmental Committee been so arranged as to include at least one member who was actively engaged in Art teaching and organisation of a Government School of Art, such statements as those made in the Committee's Report could not have appeared in print in the form of a Government publication.

III.—ON THE TRAINING OF DESIGNERS AND CRAFTSMEN.

In paragraph 27 of their Report the Departmental Committee refer to the training of designers at the College as "the most fundamental part of their 'inquiry.'" It must be remembered how few members of the Committee could lay claim to have had any experience or connection with industries dependent upon applied design. Half of their number could not have entered into the discussion with any feeling of confidence as to their personal opinions on the subject, yet the Committee state that this was "the most fundamental part of their 'inquiry.'" One of its members, Mr. Frank Warner, went out of his way to explain that the work executed by students in the schools of the district to which he was most directly connected (the centre of the English silk industry at Macclesfield) was entirely satisfactory, but as other centres of Art industry were not represented on the Committee, no recognition of the successful influence of the work of the Schools of Art in those districts was forthcoming. Mr. Warner, however, on 21st February of the present year, read a paper at a meeting of the Royal Society of Arts on "The British Silk Industry: Its Development since 1903," and used the occasion for the purpose of making a series of scathing and derogatory statements as

South Kensington and its Art Training

to the influence the Royal College of Art had on the designing world, though, we presume, he must have already been acquainted with the fact that the figures* relating to the careers of students which were supplied to the Departmental Committee were all wrong.

While referring to the Departmental Committee Report, Mr. Warner stated that :

"The investigations of that Committee led not only to the discovery of the existence of extraordinary conditions in our system of Applied Art training, but verified in a striking manner many of the objections and complaints that for years have been lodged against the methods of Art teaching in our schools.

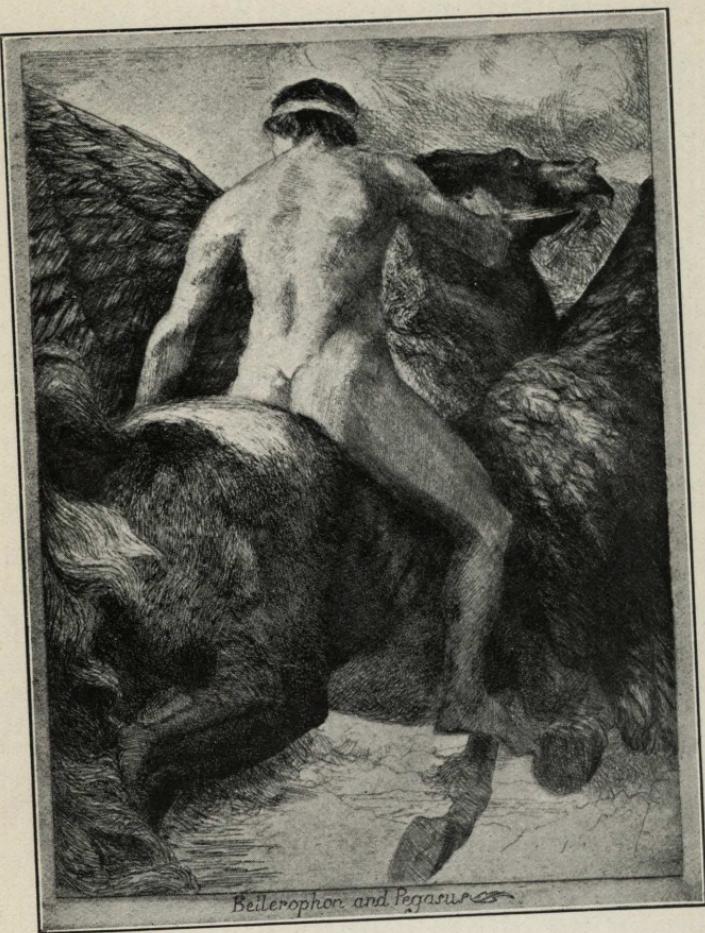
"As the Committee's report has probably not been generally

* "THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART.

"The *Journal* of 9th February has a review of Mr. C. R. Ashbee's book, 'Should We Stop Teaching Art?' Both he and the reviewer made use of statistics presented in the Board of Education's Committee's Report upon the Royal College of Art. For some years before 1908 I was in close official touch with that institution, taking part in its reorganisation during the years 1899 and 1900. Its future is still a matter of interest to me. Now the statistics published with the Report gave the Committee the impression that of some 450 students who passed through the College courses during a recent period of ten years, 32 only have made the practice of art in any form their livelihood, while 136 other students have become teachers, and 230 other past students' occupations are returned as unknown. The inaccuracy of these figures was the subject of a letter that appeared in the *Times* on 7th November, 1911. I have good reason to believe that the number of the past students referred to, and who are now engaged in the practice of art and of teaching, is at least 390, and that of the balance of 60 unaccounted for inquiry would show that some retired before completing their course of instruction, some died, and that the remainder—say, 30 only—have taken up pursuits other than Art. Hence, the number of students unaccounted for cannot be over 50 per cent., as shown in the official statistics, but something between 5 and 6 per cent., so that contentions founded on an unaccountability of over 50 per cent. become of extremely doubtful value. Under the dispensation which has succeeded that of the Secretary of the Board of Education, who was responsible for the preparation of the statistics put before the Committee, rectification, if it has not already been taken in hand, will no doubt be made. Meanwhile, it is a pity that the Committee's Report, in so far as it is flavoured by the suggestiveness of inaccurate statistics, should be taken seriously, as, for instance, when many passages were quoted from it in the course of the otherwise admirable paper read by Mr. Frank Warner at the Society's meeting on Wednesday, the 21st of February last. It is obviously good to consider and discuss how the usefulness of the Royal College of Art in prosecuting its purposes within a well-defined scope may be developed, but there seems to be little advantage in the repetition of polished phrases having the guise of *ex cathedra* pronouncements conveying wholesale condemnation which is found to spring from 'otiose conjecture,' stimulated by inaccurate statistics. Clearly, an important Committee should not have been provided with misleading materials.

"ALAN S. COLE."

N.B.—The above letter was written by Mr. Alan S. Cole, C.B., son of the founder (the late Sir Henry Cole) of the South Kensington Museum, and was published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 1st March, 1912.



Bellerophon and Pegasus

"BELLEROPHON AND PEGASUS"

(Exhibited at the Royal Academy)

From an etching by HAROLD A. RIGBY



The Report of the Departmental Committee

read, I will quote some extracts from it. The first is a very important one, being a clear recognition that handicraft, however meritorious or interesting, must give way to the claims of the manufacturer, upon whom rests the responsibility of maintaining our trade both at home and abroad, and that he can only compete successfully when, through his designer, his goods have superior merit. The report says :

" ' So far as the principal industries of this country are concerned, the methods of handicraft have long been replaced by those of the factory. It is the factory which supplies the innumerable articles of personal wear and domestic plenishing, constituting the staple of that section of British trade at home and abroad which can be regarded as in any way dependent upon Art. Form and pattern of one kind and another are an important element in the competition between manufacturers of such wares, and tend to become even more important as the differences in mechanical efficiency between trade rivals grow less and less. But they must be form and pattern which are capable of being impressed upon the goods by processes subject to definite mechanical limitations which have to be learned, so that the designer who controls them must study the conditions of the textile power-loom rather than of the embroidery frame.'

" My next quotation will show you how lamentably the students turned out by the Royal College of Art have failed to bring to the industries the artistic influence which it is their function to provide, and as a consequence much of our designing work is done by foreign designers.

" ' It might be expected that the College of Art, if the students fulfilled these conditions, would exercise that influence over the artistic trades of the country which it was founded to exercise, and that the designers, who have passed through its course and have obtained the hall-mark of its Associateship, would be eagerly snapped up by business men. All the evidence which we have been able to collect from many and diverse sources of information has brought us to the regrettable conclusion that this is not in fact the case. The needs of the industries are met in various ways. Many designs are supplied by architects or other artists who have turned their attention to industrial Art. Many are purchased, especially in the textile centres in and about Manchester and Bradford, from French designers. Thus the Calico Printers' Association, who spend £37,000 a year in designs, maintain sixteen designers in full work in Paris, as well as thirty-eight in England. Designs prepared in England supply the Indian market, those from Paris the markets of England, Europe, and America. The Wall Paper Manufacturers' Combine prefer German designs for technical adaptability, French designs for artistic skill. Of the firms which employ regular designers, some train them in their own drawing offices, others find a supply in

South Kensington and its Art Training

the local Schools of Art. Very few of them ever think of looking to the Royal College, and although some who have tried the experiment have been repaid, we find the opinion widely held that the type of designer turned out by the College is, from the manufacturing standpoint, "unemployable." "For any effect the Royal College of Art has on the designing world, you may take it that it has none at all," said one witness; or, as Dr. Garnett more sympathetically put it, "The Royal College of Art, as a college to command the confidence of the trades, has to do a good deal more to win its way."

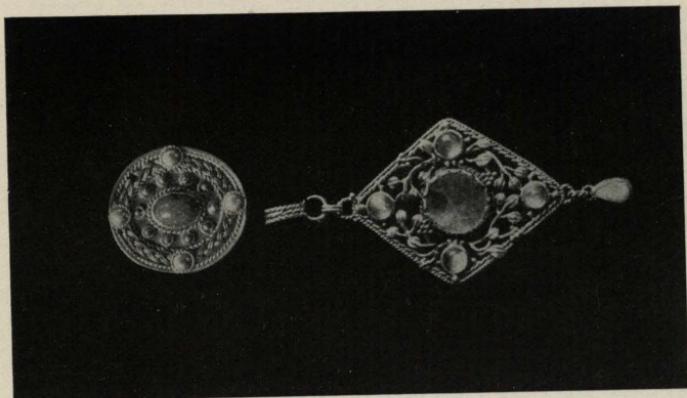
"The complaint set out is by no means confined to the Royal College of Art, but is also met with in many provincial towns where industries require the aid of practical and artistic designers. This often arises from a lack of sympathy and co-operation between those who control the administration of Art culture and those who are engaged in the manufactures and need the product of the Art Schools. It also, in part, arises from a deeply-rooted prejudice on the part of many Art teachers to machinery and machine-made goods. They know that the mass of gaudy, cheap, horrible rubbish seen in the shops and bazaars to-day is machine-made, which, of course, it is, and therefore they have a horror of machinery, and resent the application of their talents to preparing their students in any way to provide for its requirements.

"As a matter of fact, machinery will produce the most beautiful designs as easily as the most detestable, and the refusal of Art School teachers to recognise this fact has placed a very heavy handicap on our industries.

"The report deals with it as follows :

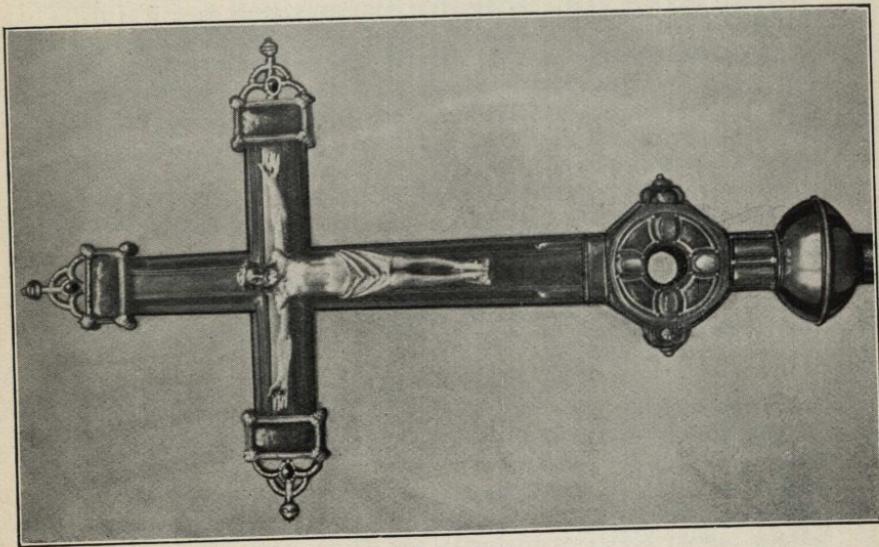
"'We cannot resist the conclusion that the failure of the College to influence manufacturers rests upon something more fundamental than can be explained away as the result of mere prejudice. There is undeniably at present a real want of sympathy between the aims of art and the aims of commerce. This is not in the least because there is any essential difficulty in finding artistic expression through the medium of a machine. As a witness who had had experience as head of the design studio of more than one great distributing house, and been himself exceptionally successful in the training of designers, put it to us, the requirements of a machine are, as a rule, "by no means unæsthetic," and, in fact, design for handicraft, just as much as design for manufacture, has to accommodate itself in a greater or less degree to the limitations and conditions imposed by the appliances used. A hand-loom or a potter's wheel is, after all, although it allows the hand to contribute more, no less a machine than is a power loom. The same witness's main criticism of the students from the College was that they had acquired a theory and an ideal which "it was very difficult to knock out of them." The training of designers in the past has no doubt been too abstract in character, and has

BROOCH AND PENDANT



G. E. SEDDING

PROCESSIONAL CROSS





The Report of the Departmental Committee

taken too little account either of the conditions of machinery or those of material, or of the economics of production. Some of us are disposed to hold that the real problem lies primarily not in any supposed barrier against the production of beautiful things by machinery, for there is none, but in the fact that the public, which the manufacturers serve, does not, for whatever reason, purchase beautiful things, the fault being attributable in varying degrees to the taste of the purchasers themselves, to the taste of the manufacturers, and to the taste of the retail salesmen, with whom, rather than with the purchaser, the actual choice between this pattern and that is supposed to rest. But the soundness of this view must lack proof until the College has provided the manufacturers with designers equally competent from the technical and from the artistic standpoint, and until the manufacturers and the public have shown a deliberate preference for the baser sort of design.'

" You will notice that part of this quotation dwells on a very important feature of our industrial problem—viz., the taste of the manufacturer, of the purchasing public, and of the retail salesman, who stands between the two. The whole thing summarised amounts to this—that if the manufacturer is able and willing to produce articles of real artistic merit, and the public are desirous of purchasing them, the retailer has it in his power to render abortive the aims of the one and the desires of the other.

" It is a very serious matter, and we may well ask the question if the retailer exercises his power in such a way as to check the production and use of artistic goods. It is a very difficult question to answer, but, on the whole, I should say he does not. In many cases the retailer buys with taste and skill, based on some artistic leaning, if not on actual training; in others he rejects beautiful patterns and favours *bizarre* and *outré* productions. In this matter I think the whole three hang together—I mean the manufacturer, the retailer, and the consumer. All of them equally require a thorough artistic training, which at present but few of them get. The influence of the one reacts upon the other, and as a general upward tendency in the direction of Art culture prevails, our production of silk, as well as of other things, will improve.

" The report goes on to say :

" It is in any case admitted that there is a demand, and perhaps a growing demand, for beautiful goods from a certain limited public, and that individual manufacturers may quite possibly find it to their profit to make a corner in this specialised trade, but this consideration leaves the great mass of textile and other manufacturers, upon which the economic question turns, wholly unaffected. Were all causes of reproach against the Royal College of Art removed, it is not to be expected that a sudden revolution in taste will be worked, or that better-class design will

South Kensington and its Art Training

win the confidence of the manufacturers and the appreciation of the public in a day.'

"Exactly so. Art education, although it but touches the merest fringe of the people, is having an immense influence in the direction of a demand for better things. Remember that Art training in connection with our industries does not date back many years. In 1851 it stood almost at zero, and although since then we have accomplished much, the great mass of the population remains untouched by any direct Art training, and in its choice of what is good or bad has nothing to guide it but the influence of its surroundings, which in all honesty we cannot claim as providing in the main an atmosphere of artistic thought and learning."

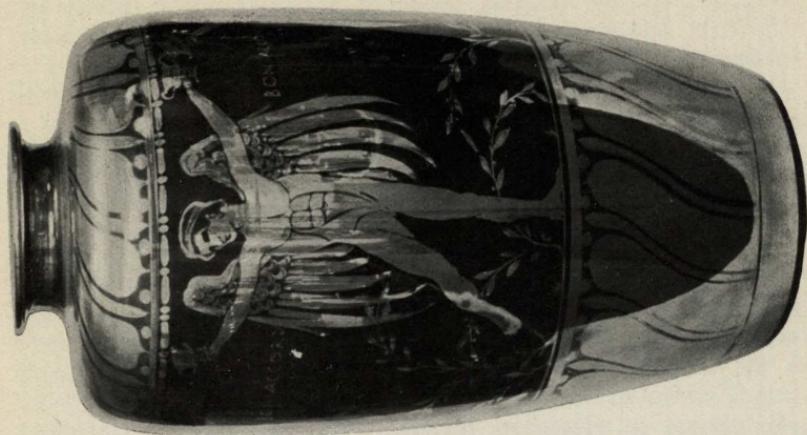
Evidently Mr. Warner's attack on the Royal College of Art came as a surprise to those present at the meeting of the Royal Society, for in the discussion which followed this statement (which is only a portion of Mr. Warner's paper), and in which some half-dozen or more gentlemen joined, no reference was made to his condemnation of the Royal College but attributed what faults there were to be found with the ineffectiveness of our manufacturing system to such causes as "labour troubles and the rumours of war, which were very disastrous to a trade (meaning the silk industry) connected with a luxury." A well-known silk merchant, Mr. E. W. Cox, who also spoke, stated that :

"He was happy to say that only during the present week he had had delivered to his firm a most excellent sample of English-made goods of the latest patterns, whose colourings were equal to any to be obtained on the Continent, while the price compared most favourably with that of the foreign article. He hoped the Silk Association would induce the manufacturers to do something to show that they really existed; in particular, he hoped they would exhibit at the forthcoming Exhibition. The day was past for hiding their light under a bushel; and the idea that they would have their goods copied before they were properly launched in the market was dead and buried. Those who visited that Exhibition would, he was sure, see an admirable example of what British silk manufacturers could do."

If we are to take Mr. Warner's statement as representing the general feeling of the Departmental Committee on this subject of the training of designers, his paper has served a useful purpose in enabling us to see exactly what their recommendations are based upon.

There appears to be no valid reason why an authority on the silk industry should have considered it necessary, when reading a paper on the development of the silk industry

POTTERY
(For Messrs. Pilkington's, Manchester)
GORDON M. FORSYTH





The Report of the Departmental Committee

during the last ten years, to decry the work carried on at an institution intended as a training ground for teachers and designers for every conceivable trade connected with the Arts. One is at a loss to understand the object of such an attack.

Mr. Warner, when speaking at the meeting of the Departmental Committee, quoted Macclesfield and Bradford as being *the only* towns where the Art Schools have been an invaluable aid to the local industry. As these towns are important centres for the silk and textile industries, Mr. Warner's acquaintance with the Art work carried on in those districts was a natural one; and that he should be proud of their results is perhaps a compliment to his own personal endeavours on behalf of those industries. But are we to believe that the Art students and designers of other manufacturing districts are less capable, mentally or artistically, in meeting the requirements of the manufacturer? Certainly not. Men equally as competent as the designers of Macclesfield and Bradford can be found in all our manufacturing districts; which fact forces one to the conclusion that the fault must lie at the door of someone other than the designer. We shall see later that it is to a great extent the manufacturer himself who is to blame, as he does not encourage his workers to further progress and efficiency by offering them, after they have attained that efficiency which is required, a fair remuneration for their services.

Certainly the best paragraph in the paper which Mr. Warner read before the Royal Society of Arts is where he states :

" I mean the manufacturer, the retailer, and the consumer. All of them equally require a thorough artistic training, which at present but *few* of them get. The influence of the one reacts upon the other, and as a general upward tendency in the direction of Art culture prevails, our production of silk, as well as of other things, will improve."

This was a very welcome admission that it is *not* the designer altogether who is to blame; but even then one hardly expected Mr. Warner to wind up his lecture by making an apology for the views he had expressed, and also for showing the impossibility of the carrying out of the Departmental Committee's recommendations in the following words :

" Were all causes of reproach against the Royal College of Art removed, it is not to be expected that a sudden revolution in taste

South Kensington and its Art Training

will be worked, or that better-class design will win the confidence of the manufacturers and the appreciation of the public in a day."

A neat little compliment was paid to Mr. Warner at the conclusion of his address before the Royal Society of Arts, which further emphasises the use which South Kensington has been to the silk trade in particular. Sir George Birdwood referred to the manner in which Mr. Warner's late and respected father had devoted himself to the revival of the silk manufactures of this country after their collapse between 1860 and 1870 in the following words :

" The late Mr. Warner had also other special qualifications for facing so successfully so adverse a fate, in his remarkably refined artistic taste, both in respect of design and colour, inborn of generations of experience in the manufacture of silks ; and, again, in a natural modesty that always left him in imperfect content with his work, and intent only on its further improvement. He instantly removed himself from the school he was attending at the time of his father's death, and began to practise himself in designing for silk fabrics, and in card-cutting, and in plain and figured weaving ; while, later on, he studied of evenings at the Spitalfields School of Design, one of the first to be established in this country under the direction of the Victoria and Albert Museum, that glorious memorial of the genius of Sir Henry Cole. This practical training in the mechanical and artistic technicalities of his work was one of the secrets of the late Mr. Warner's success in life, not only as a manufacturer of silks of supreme artistic merit, but also as a trader in them."

That there was some difference of opinion among the members of the Departmental Committee on the subject can be seen from their statement that :

" Some of us are disposed to hold that the real problem lies primarily not in any supposed barrier against the production of beautiful things by machinery, for there is none, but in the fact that the public, which the manufacturers serve, does not, for whatever reason, purchase beautiful things, the fault being attributable in varying degrees to the taste of the purchasers themselves, to the taste of the manufacturers, and to the taste of the retail salesman, with whom, rather than with the purchaser, the actual choice between this pattern and that is supposed to rest."

The purchaser, the manufacturer, and the retail salesman are here marshalled together as the cause of failure, as against that of the South Kensington designer.

If Art commenced to pander to the public taste, the artist, as an individual, would cease to exist, and would then execute designs in an automatic and stereotyped manner,



ROUNDEL IN STAINED GLASS

H. M. TRAVERS



The Report of the Departmental Committee

according to the period and particular type of people to be catered for.

The Committee were also led to believe that designers who were thoroughly competent from the trade point of view could command liberal salaries, but they deplored the fact (?) that the Royal College of Art could not supply such men ! This was a direct charge of incompetency against the students to fulfil the ordinary conditions of manufacture. Further, they also deplored the fact that out of seventeen students who left a Yorkshire School of Art to become national scholars, not one returned to his trade. What became of these seventeen students ?

The Committee acknowledges that the students from the manufacturing centres who enter the Royal College of Art have already secured a good level of attainment in their studies, and we can take it for granted that they are, as a rule, the best material from their respective districts, and have already acquired some considerable knowledge of the technical requirements of their trade.

Are we to assume that their subsequent training at the Royal College of Art has unfitted them to return to those branches of work with which they were formerly connected ? That would be an accusation of dullness, and one might almost use the term " thickheadedness," against these seventeen for having forsaken their former trade, to which it would be to their advantage to return.

Why do they not return ?

There is no inducement offered to them to do so, and consequently they decide to look for more remunerative employment in other spheres of labour, especially the teaching profession.

Is it possible that, after a period of from two to five years in London, they should not receive an inspiration from the training they had undergone, which would benefit them so that they would return with renewed energy for the particular sphere of work in which they were formerly engaged ? No.

What they ask themselves is : Shall I, in case of return, be able to secure a reasonable remuneration for my services to the manufacturer ? And will the salary received be any higher for my having gained, during the period I have been absent at Kensington, greater proficiency as a craftsman ?

Finally, they decide not to return.

There are, at the present time, eight students studying at the Royal College of Art all hailing from one important

South Kensington and its Art Training

manufacturing centre, and each determined to strive his utmost to avoid having to go back to work in that district on account of the meagre inducements in the way of salaries that are offered to them. The manufacturers, or rather those of Mr. Warner's type (it would be a mistake to suppose that all our manufacturers hold the same views as those represented in the Committee's Report), have endeavoured to establish a charge of inefficiency against the designers, whereas they know only too well that there are other and more real causes for their apparent dissatisfaction.

One opinion, as expressed by the Departmental Committee, was that

"The Wall Paper Manufacturers' Combine prefer German designs for technical adaptability," etc., and "very few of them think of looking to the Royal College," etc. (*see pages 41 and 42*).

With reference to the latter statement, if, as some of the manufacturers acknowledge, they are satisfied with the work done by the students while attending the *local Schools of Art*, and also find that they are quite capable of fulfilling their requirements, it seems strange that the manufacturer should see no more of them when they have once fought their way, after keen competition, to the Royal College of Art.

The reason is, as already explained, that the manufacturer knows he would have to pay a little extra salary for the designer's services if he returned to him, whereas, as long as the student is content to remain at home, he is able to get those services at a low figure. The manufacturers, for this reason, have a great dislike to students who leave them to go to South Kensington.

As will be seen later, the Departmental Committee's way out of the difficulty is to suggest a scheme of decentralisation, which would necessarily be the means of preventing the annual migration of the best of their students to London, and who would then also avoid the "contaminating" influences of that great Art centre; and finally, what was the most desirable thing of all, it would ensure their being able to retain their services on terms suitable to the manufacturers' dictatorial fancies.

As an additional proof of these arguments, the following passage in Mr. C. R. Ashbee's book, entitled "Should We Stop Teaching Art?" is worthy of notice. He there states:

"I have in the last fifteen years placed a number of skilled



51



CARPET

(For firm at Kidderminster)

J. P. BLAND



62-3 12.27

The Report of the Departmental Committee

'craftsmen, who have passed through the workshops of the Guild of Handicrafts, as teachers in different Technical and Art schools in England and abroad. These men are attracted by the *higher wage and permanent* employment, but it usually means they have given up their crafts.'

If the Departmental Committee had added, as an appendix to their Report, a statement showing what salaries were being paid to the designers in manufacturing districts, it would have enlightened the public considerably as to the true state of affairs.

For instance, in the Staffordshire Potteries there are some three hundred or more firms producing articles of ware for distribution to all parts of the world, and in two hundred and fifty cases out of that number no designer (in the true sense of the word) at all is employed. The manufacturers find that their needs can be met with in the following manner: A boy, we will say, commences work in the factory as a "flower painter"—that is, he is employed to paint poppies or forget-me-nots (or whatever flower he specialises in and is at the moment popular with the buyers and with the public) on to the articles which require decoration. It is a common thing in the Potteries for one man to continue working for thirty years or more painting one particular type of foliage or bird form over these various articles.

If, in the course of time, a vacancy occurs, he becomes appointed to the position of "designer," which means that he will then be required to place the poppies, etc., on to the ware in some definite order, and, in many instances, according to some fixed arrangement or "pattern" decided upon after consultation with a manager or the traveller for the firm.

These gentlemen, in turn, have to meet and obey the varying demands of the public. The manufacturer himself finds the arrangements made—whereby the flower painter becomes "designer"—quite satisfactory, as the only way in which he is affected is that he pays the "designer" a few shillings more (the salary of a "designer" is usually from £2 to 50s. per week, rarely more) for his services.

With regard to the remaining fifty firms (such as Josiah Wedgwood and Sons, Doulton's, Minton's etc.), we find that at some period of their history they have employed skilled "artists" and designers at respectable salaries, and, of course, may still be doing so. They have a reputation

South Kensington and its Art Training

to keep up, whereas the other two hundred and fifty firms have not, except that they are known to supply, say, a dinner service of sixty pieces for 9s. 6d., which we can see advertised in the pages of the *Strand* and other popular journals.

The deeper one goes into the matter contained in this remarkable Departmental Report, the more we become enlightened as to the general ideas of the members of the Committee on Art education.

The next statement which I wish to refer to is a direct acknowledgment of the fact that the designer is underpaid.

It is where the Report states that

"The inducements which divert students from their industries might be removed."

The remark refers to the tendency, which they state there is to be found, for designers to take up the teaching profession, where a more satisfactory rate of remuneration is paid; and further suggests that the Committee favour either

"The cutting down of teachers' salaries or preventing students from manufacturing centres taking up the teaching profession."

At present there is a tendency for Art teachers' salaries to rise, and the removal of these inducements from the students would savour of autocracy.

In the light of all the foregoing statements in this chapter, therefore, the plea put forward that the South Kensington student is unable to produce designs that are practical for purposes of manufacture is an absurd one.

Mr. Edward R. Taylor, late Headmaster of the Birmingham School of Art, an institution whose importance as a training ground for designers is well known, and for which he was mainly responsible, states in a work which he published :

"A few weeks in a manufactory will show to one who possesses this Art power enough of the possibilities and desirabilities of its products as shall enable him to begin to imbue them with Art which shall be practical."

Another authority, of French nationality, Mr. Ernest Chesneau, in his book on "The Education of the Artist," devotes a chapter to "Design," and while referring to a Commission of Inquiry as to the causes which have led to such impoverishment of the inventiveness, once so fertile, of French producers, states :

"All the manufacturers to whom we have applied for information make the same answer, saying 'There is a demand for copies



PAINTED DECORATION

(For Coronation Procession)

G. P. DENHAM

The Report of the Departmental Committee

of old patterns and moulds, and we can always dispose of them to advantage. When we bring out new patterns we are at *greater expense* and less sure of a sale.' ''

Here, then, is a suggested lack of speculation on the part of the manufacturer, and not a complaint as to the ability of the designer.

This argument applies with equal force to our own manufacturers and to the general public, who are not yet sufficiently trained in Art matters to enable them better to appreciate the efforts of the designers of to-day. Until we have a more general system of Art education, our own public can be excused for a similar lingering after the old patterns.

The same author, it may be noted, refers to the work carried on in this country in the following words :

" Within thirty years England has succeeded in taking a high place among the nations which shine in *Art applied to manufactures*; it has indeed shown a singular aptitude in assimilating the spirit of more creative nations, more especially of Japan, and adapting it to its own requirements and means of production. Other nations have benefited by the lesson."

This is indeed a strong testimony in favour of our true position in these matters, and a testimony to the work of English designers of the type of Mr. William Morris and Mr. Walter Crane, who perhaps have been mainly responsible for the development of design for industrial purposes in this country.

The scheme of decentralisation which the Departmental Committee, in their final recommendations, put forward would be the means of giving a very serious blow to Art education generally, and would prevent all aspiring and ambitious students from stepping out of the groove in which they may have commenced their careers, and where they would for ever have to suffer the narrowing effects of local influences, as compared with the broader outlook which they would secure by means of a long course of study at Kensington.

IV.—THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECENTRALISATION.

The policy, as conveyed to the mind by the recommendations of the Departmental Committee for the future organisation of State-aided Art training, is of an iconoclastic nature. We find it summed up in the following words, as printed in their Report :

South Kensington and its Art Training

" 1. That the training of designers for the manufacturing industries should be specialised, and should be undertaken by provincial Colleges of Art, each of which, while continuing to provide a general education in Art, should devote special attention to the needs of the dominant industry in its locality, and to this end should take steps to associate with its work representative manufacturers and artisans belonging to the industry.

" 2. That these provincial colleges should be conducted as departments of colleges which deal with the scientific as well as the artistic sides of the dominant industries in their localities."

If an attempt is made to put such recommendations into effect, it will mean putting an end to the usefulness of South Kensington and its position—which has taken nearly one hundred years to attain—as the chief centre of Art instruction in this Kingdom.

The work carried on during the present century, when *402 out of 459* students have obtained remunerative employment as a result of their study at the Royal College of Art, is the best proof of the success of the present régime, and augurs well for the future.

The Committee state that :

" If the training of designers is to be kept in close relation to the industries it must in the main be carried on in the actual centres where those industries are located, and where alone the necessary equipment can without unreasonable expense be made available.

" Moreover the mere provision of a technical equipment at South Kensington would do little to convert South Kensington into an industrial centre, and if the designer is to think in terms of his industry, it is probably at least as important that he should live in the atmosphere of that industry, think its thoughts, and absorb its ideals as that he should merely be in a position to handle its machinery."

and in the summary of their recommendations advise :

" 1. That the training of designers for the manufacturing industries should be specialised and undertaken by provincial colleges," etc.

" 2. That these provincial colleges should be conducted," etc. (*see paragraphs 1 and 2 at top of page*).

The extremely narrowing influences that such a change in the present organisation would entail would have a deplorable effect on the Art and Craft work of the country in the future.

The students who annually arrive in London from the provinces to take up their work at the Royal College of Art



POSTER
(100 Guinea Prize Design)
G. P. DENHAM



The Report of the Departmental Committee

or at any of the other large educational institutions for Art, Science, Music, and other studies find a great incentive in their surroundings, and are considerably improved, merely through having the opportunity of mixing with others equally or more brilliant from the other provincial districts.

About fifty students only, out of all those attending the different schools throughout the Kingdom, are sufficiently advanced to enable them to succeed in gaining admittance to the course of training at the Royal College of Art each year, and as they represent the best of the students from some four hundred schools under the Board of Education, it is difficult to realise what necessity there would be for such a set of useless buildings as these provincial colleges would certainly be, for the students attending them would necessarily be of inferior attainments compared with those proceeding to Kensington. The country would be asked to spend a vast amount of money on producing a type of worker for whom there could possibly be no chance of employment.

The industrial student would be tied down to the particular craft with which he chanced to be associated and which happened to be the staple industry of his particular district. Such moneys would be far better spent in developing the excellent work already being done in the Craft classes at the Royal College, by setting up the machinery necessary.

This could be done without "unreasonable expense," as the Committee worded it—a remark which shows the present everyday attitude of indifference to the necessities of the Art student as compared with students studying in other grooves where advancement is necessary. The cost of fixing up this machinery at Kensington, as compared with the cost of building and organising provincial colleges, would be ridiculously small.

The Committee of Enquiry suggest that the Royal College of Art should be a school of advanced studies only, providing courses of one or two years' duration; but this statement is flatly contradicted by one of the members of the same Committee in the Appendix which immediately follows the Departmental Report.

Here Mr. Ricardo suggests that the Royal College of Art should supply a training that is "not a mere surface

South Kensington and its Art Training

veneer," a result which would inevitably follow if the above recommendations of the Committee as to establishment of provincial colleges were carried into effect.

If the Royal College of Art is to hold the position of importance it is intended it should occupy, there must be no cutting down of the period of training there, and no comparison must be made with the training given by the proposed subordinate colleges of the provinces. It should stand far ahead of these, much as the Universities do in relation to the public schools of the country. The staffing of the Royal College of Art, if it is to retain its present high order in this respect, makes it next to impossible to realise how the lesser provincial colleges would be catered for in regard to their professors if the work done by such institutions were to be of any material value.

The period of training at Kensington must not be reduced in the drastic manner suggested, but rather extended.

Until the year 1900 students were allowed to continue studying for a period of seven years; at present five is the time allotted for a full course. But to ask that this should be reduced to two is at once outrageous and preposterous.

One of the chief factors in the training at South Kensington is the close proximity of the College to the Museum, and since it is environment more than anything else that goes to form character, can anyone estimate the value of the Museum in the artistic upbringing of students?

The Universities supply an excellent example in support of this argument. As is commonly realised, students congregate there not for the purpose of "cramming," but that, by mixing with the "brains" of the country, they may receive some "sparks of wisdom" which will enable them to philosophise more reasonably on life's problems generally.

To take away this golden opportunity from the Art student would be on a par with the closing down of the colleges at Oxford or Cambridge. Kensington, with its world-renowned treasures and long history, must remain the real seat of our National Art Training.



POSTER
("Freshmen's Evening")
F. C. HERRICK



CHAPTER III. (*continued*).

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF ADVICE ON ART.

CIRCULARS 786 AND 798.

THE final chapter in the course of events through which the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, and the Government schools throughout the Kingdom have survived is the direct outcome of the Departmental Committee's recommendations—that is, the appointment of a "Council of Advice on Art." It is strange, in view of the fact that the Report of the Departmental Committee has been proved (not only in the humble attempt made by the writer of this work, but also by the letters and opinions which have been quoted as representing the most enlightened ideas on the subject) to be entirely misleading and valueless, that the only way out of the difficult position in which the Board of Education felt themselves placed was to appoint this new "Committee of Advice," instead of allowing the excellent work done under the supervision of the Council of Art (1900-10) to be carried out still further. The result is that the "beginners" in matters of State-aided training represented on the new Committee have attempted, as Mr. Walter Crane has so expressly put it, "to dig up Art by the roots to see how it is getting on." Whether they hope the plant will die is another matter! It rests with those who care anything for the tradition and long history attached to South Kensington to wake up and to prevent the wholesale destruction of our national system that will inevitably result from their recommendation—that is, if we are to judge by the initial attempts at reorganising by that body and by the opinions expressed by some of its members. The first action of the Committee was to issue to the schools throughout the Kingdom Circulars 786 and 798, now almost as famous as Form IV. was in another sphere of politics. These official documents decree that the time has arrived for Art to be put into the melting-pot, and give effect to those sentiments by instantly abolishing the system of examinations as carried on during the past fifty years and substituting a scheme which means the disorganising of the

South Kensington and its Art Training

larger schools and the extinction of many of the smaller schools throughout the country.

Supposing the new system to have advantages over the old one, which its authors no doubt assume it will have, why should not the interests of those who are actively engaged in Art organising, and who may have spent their whole lives in attaining the positions they hold, and also the interests of those students who have already spent some few years in fulfilling the requirements of the older system, be guarded?

Do the Standing Committee of Advice on Art really realise what this circular means to these individuals? The few Art masters sitting on this Committee are heads of large schools whose position would be considerably improved by the new regulations for the conduct of State-aided schools. The heads of the smaller schools (which, of course, are in the great majority) throughout the Kingdom would suffer correspondingly, and many schools would be closed. No useful purpose could be served by criticising the new syllabus, but it is sufficient, perhaps, to state that the National Society of Art Masters, at their annual meeting in July last, passed a resolution requesting the withdrawal of the circular pending further discussion.

The Standing Committee appear to have entirely overlooked the first question which one naturally assumed would have been asked: Has the Royal College of Art during the period 1900-10 failed in its purpose as set out by the Council of Art (1900-10)?—the answer to which would have been No.

Therefore why the necessity for all these drastic changes which are foreshadowed in the circular referred to?

In the Appendix to this volume will be found a few cuttings taken from letters sent to the Press which express the general attitude of the teaching profession and others towards these newfangled notions on Art education.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INFLUENCE AND METHODS OF ART TRAINING.

"I ascribe the merit of the establishment of the Department of Practical Art at Marlboro' House as the *foremost uniform and consistent advocate* of the better education of the people."

—SIR HENRY COLE in 1852.

I.—THE UTILITY OF ART.

IN the beginnings of Art there was no such thing as "artists," and, as already stated in the early part of this book, no distinction between what is spoken of as "fine" and "applied" Art, for from the very nature of things there is *utility in all Art*.

The rudest thing man first made for the commonest use was "Art," and in a small degree "Fine Art"; and the most elaborate piece of craftsmanship or the finest specimen of Fine Art has a useful purpose governing it in some degree or other, and *utility* (varying, of course, in degree) was the general motive governing each piece of workmanship produced. The early manuscripts were written not for the purpose of decoration only, but as an act of devotion and prayer. Again, the Greek statues were not produced entirely in the spirit of "Art for Art's sake," but as an acknowledgment and offering to a deity.

Regarding the utility of Fine Art, we all know that a picture may influence our natures with higher or lower motives; but if a picture is never seen, there is no influence either for good or bad.

The production of commodities and articles of practical and everyday use, therefore, can serve a very high purpose as an advocate towards the better education of the people.

What now seems necessary as regards the general education of the public in the matter of Art education, in addition to what has already been effected, is that they should be taught the "principles underlying taste" rather than "drawing" under the old system of copying from Greek outlines, etc. Lectures on "Taste" might be given, and properly organised visits to museums (established for the

South Kensington and its Art Training

purposes of education) could be made at regular intervals. A system framed somewhat on such lines would have a far-reaching effect on the tastes of the public and would also cause the work of the "artist" or designer to be better appreciated.

As a general rule the public is puzzled as to what is the best article to buy, and after wandering through the shopkeeper's showrooms (sometimes for a considerable length of time) are finally persuaded by the seller that such and such a thing is the best, probably because there is more profit to be made on the sale of that particular article. Yet very often the purchaser is quite capable as a draughtsman and has had some Art training, but, as we see, to no definite purpose. The State ought not only to produce capable draughtsmen, but also people to appreciate. Systematic training of this nature would ensure people gaining the power to perceive and appreciate the beautiful whenever present, and their lives generally would be improved; the base and ugly would be ignored, and a beautiful object would meet with a ready appreciation.

Again, the object in view as regards the State-aided Art students should be not altogether as at present imagined—that they should become expert craftsmen or trained teachers—but rather that they should be taught to realise that what the public require is further enlightenment as to the way to *observe* things in order to be able to appreciate them, and also to know the principles that are found to underlie the *beautiful* whenever present.

The quickening of the perspective faculty and the power of reasoning correctly are more to be sought for than the actual training of each individual as a skilful manipulator of the pen or brush.

(This is not the age for producing men of Michael Angelo's and of Dürer's type. It is a commercial epoch that we are passing through.)

We should no longer tolerate hideous decoration in our buildings and homes, and a demand would ensue that each particular article or unit of decoration should be part of a well-considered whole. Special committees in each town, appointed to watch the interests of ratepayers in these matters, would become as necessary as the committees on "pleasure grounds," "baths," and other matters connected with the subdivisions of a town's requirements.



POSTER

G. H. DAY



The Influence and Methods of Art Training

II.—EARLY TRAINING IN ART.

Drawing is most frequently looked upon as an accomplishment to be cultivated only by the few, and those in whom there is what is termed "natural ability"; whereas the broader outlook on its uses as a "means of expression" and "the cultivation of taste" is overlooked.

If we accept this view, and set to work to find out how the latter objects can be accomplished, it will be necessary to study the alphabet of drawing and then find out what objects are gained by the use of the pencil or brush. If a child is taught that a line drawn horizontally will express repose, that a vertical line suggests rigidity, and that the curved line gives an idea of movement, the ground is then clear to enable the teacher to develop the natural instinct which his pupils may possess by setting them to draw some object or form in which those principles occur.

Results, both beneficial and interesting, can always be realised by this method. Quite recently a class of boys was asked to make a drawing of any two objects they could think of which expressed, respectively, movement and repose. Before allowing them to commence their task, illustrations were shown to them which expressed some particular idea or emotion—for instance, a photograph of an Egyptian tomb and a piece of Venetian glass as expressing the static and dynamic elements in Art. The drawings produced naturally showed very varied ideas of the subject, but the boy who had drawn a sketch of a flying machine passing over a graveyard had succeeded in more ways than one in answering satisfactorily the question.

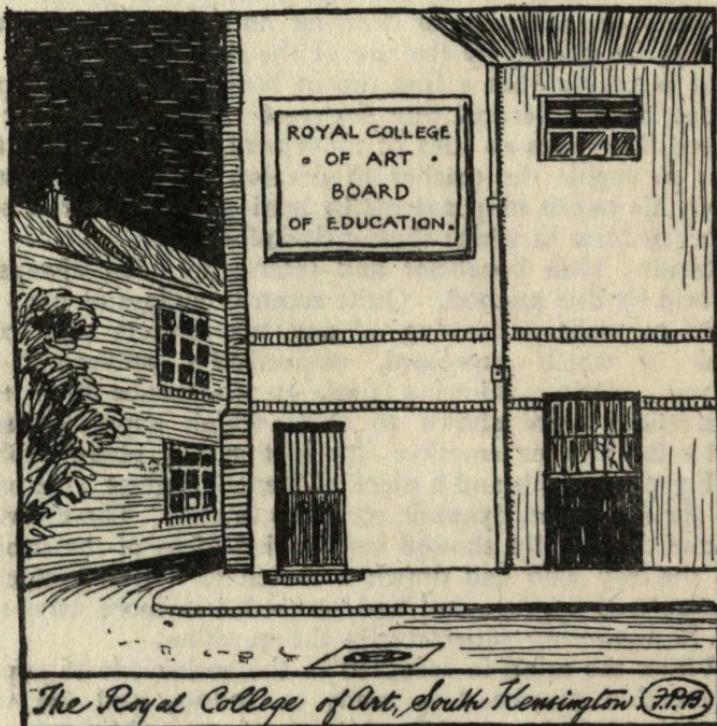
Whilst the mind is occupied in the endeavour to express an emotion the hand is ready to follow, and the word "drawing" is forgotten in the eagerness to give expression to one's thoughts.

The boy who is made capable of "putting down" by means of a clear line some definite expression conveying a meaning not only to himself, but to the spectator, has accomplished much more than the mere copying of a Greek outline in which the imagination has not had the slightest part to play in its execution.

The value of a clear line must be impressed strongly on the student, and attempts at "feathery" renderings discouraged, as one would discourage the person who was learning to write and commenced to make the letter A by a

South Kensington and its Art Training

series of indefinite curves and numerous erasures with the indiarubber. To make well the letter A the boy must continually be repeating the lines composing that form, and not rubbing in and out until he secures a correct result; so firmness of line must be very strongly enforced in this stage of a student's career.



ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART, SOUTH KENSINGTON

The old system of teaching drawing has been to "look at something" and "put it down," not think *what* you are putting down and *why* the form is of such a character.

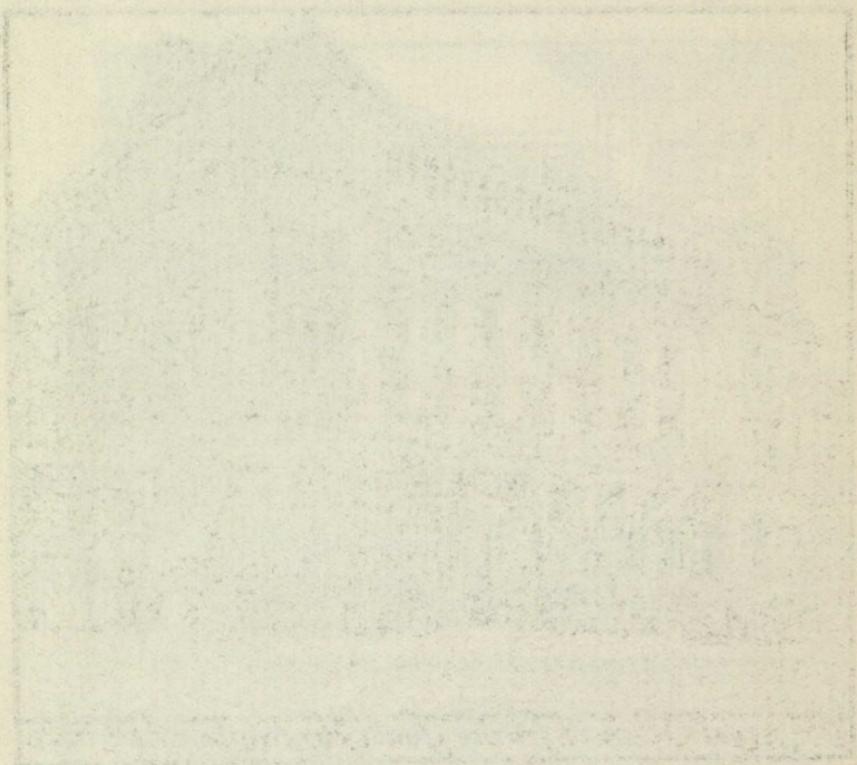
Until the boy has realised the necessity of sound thinking while drawing he has not commenced to realise its uses as a means of expression.



The Royal College of Science : South Kensington S.W. WM. KEESEY
Decr. 1921

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, SOUTH KENSINGTON

W. M. KEESEY



100-0000000

The Influence and Methods of Art Training

He should afterwards be told to write down a few lines explaining in words his impression of the object drawn, its proportions and general appearance, etc. To do this he has got "to think," and the drawing would at once show whether he had expressed his thoughts in keeping with the proportions, etc., which he had stated in writing.

The observation becomes quickened and the perceptive faculty develops as the work proceeds, and the sense of proportion becomes an easy matter compared with the other mechanical means which have been generally in use, such as the measuring with the pencil placed at arm's length to ascertain the width of an object in relation to its height. This assuredly is the most fatal practice in use in some of our schools, and especially in those secondary and elementary schools where the teaching of drawing is left entirely in the hands of the general-subject teacher, and is not under the supervision of an experienced Art teacher.

It is easily realised how this latter system becomes a fatal bar to the power of rendering spontaneously impressions of objects, etc., such as is urged in the previous paragraphs. Imagine holding up the pencil at arm's length when drawing a moving object, such as a running horse or a railway train in motion, and the futility of such a system is at once plainly seen, and one cannot too strongly urge its discontinuance.

The eye itself is always capable of recognising whether a drawing is a correct representation of a subject, or a portrait a correct likeness; therefore it should be trained to observe the efforts of the hand and be in itself the correct judge of what is right and wrong in the proportions, etc., of the thing being rendered.

By familiarising the eye to such uses the question of "Taste" begins to assert itself in the mind, as *proportion* in things is naturally the first thing looked for when the eye has correctly mastered its principles.

Fitness for its purpose is the next question one asks when looking at the object, and surely these things are the first steps in the forming of a feeling for correct taste in everything with which we are associated.

One who had commenced to realise these principles would not purchase the vase with the foot so narrow in width as to cause it to tumble over with the first draught from the door, or the chairs with backs whose ornamentation was

South Kensington and its Art Training

higher in relief than would be comfortable for an afternoon's *siesta*, or the fluted cup which caused its contents, when in the act of drinking, to drip all over the clean white tablecloth.

These few examples sufficiently illustrate that a simple sense of *fitness* is all that is required as regards the appreciation of *form* which is the outcome of "GOOD TASTE."

APPENDIX

From the *Schoolmaster*, 4th May, 1912.

CIRCULAR 786.

" *To the Editor.*

" SIR,—Everyone interested in Art teaching owes you cordial thanks for your excellent article last week on this subject. Since the fusion of the late Science and Art Department with the Board of Education, and the abolition of the post of Art Director, the Board has shown decided hostility to Schools of Art. Under the Morant régime—the spirit of which still survives and permeates the Board root and branch—the officials have done their best to disable the larger schools and destroy the smaller ones; in some cases they have already succeeded in doing this, and Circular 786 is the effective instrument designed to administer the *coup de grâce* to those smaller schools which are courageous enough to continue their existence. In schools situated in country towns of from 10,000 to 50,000 population it will be very difficult to prepare students for the examinations in drawing, because the number of advanced students in such schools are insufficient to permit the schools to run life classes for the study of the figure; whilst preparation for the further comprehensive examinations in painting, modelling, pictorial design, and industrial design will be out of the question. The fate of these schools is not difficult to foresee: they will be lowered to the status of 'Art classes.' This is very hard, especially in those cases where years of work and effort have resulted in the provision of decent buildings and equipment, and the teachers have naturally expected some security of status and tenure.

" As regards the larger schools in towns of from 50,000 to 250,000, the policy of the Board has been to hustle them into technical schools, where they occupy rooms in uncongenial, barrack-like establishments, under science men who have no knowledge of Art or sympathy with it, and who desire to run it on similar lines to science and technical instruction. This has sapped the life and vitality of the schools, and students have been driven to the more congenial atmosphere of private schools run by artists themselves for their own profit.

" Of course, the Board's officials will throw all responsibility for the Circular and its provisions on to the Committee of Advice for Art. Who appointed that committee, and on what principles were the members of it selected? They were certainly not elected by the Art teaching profession, nor by manufacturers of

South Kensington and its Art Training

artistic products. Artists as a body are notoriously conservative; many have long desired the extinction of Schools of Art, which develop too much talent and create too much competition to be desirable from the professional point of view. *When an expert in Art education is appointed to direct the Art activities of the Board, and is given sufficient power and authority to put an end to official humbug, we may look for some improvement* in these matters, but until that is done the futility and ineptitude which for many years have characterised the Board's administration of Art matters will continue.

“ ‘ ART ORGANISER.’ ”

“ SIR,—I heartily congratulate you on the valuable and spirited leader in your issue of the 27th instant on the absurd Circular from the Board of Education, No. 786. I should like, with your permission, to view this matter from the standpoint of a manufacturer, and, later on, if you will allow me, I will give my ideas as a ‘ lay ’ mind on the prospects, as they appear to me, of the Art pupil teacher, as I have some knowledge on this subject.

“ As an employer on a fairly large scale, the Circular directly concerns me and others in a similar position more than appears on the surface. But it most deeply and seriously affects those starting out in life who have their living to earn at the bench or at the lathe. Let me demonstrate this: at present youthful hands are generally recruited from the *elementary schools*—seldom from secondary schools. The higher education given in the latter appears to unfit the lads for apron work; they look for something better in keeping with the more advanced education they have received, and so the secondary scholar cold-shoulders the workshop to a very large extent.

“ According to Circular 786, examinations in drawing, painting, modelling, pictorial design and industrial design for *handicrafts or manufactures* are only to be open to candidates who have enjoyed ‘ a good general education up to the age of sixteen or later ’ ! In consequence of this, lads who have hitherto attended the technical classes and had the great advantage of expert evening-class teaching, in keeping with the trade they follow in the day time, will be at an immense disadvantage. The evening schools will be closed against this class, the class from which we draw our supply of workers, and turn them into skilled artisans, the teaching of the technical schools being of great advantage in this work.

“ What is at the bottom of this Circular? Is it class prejudice, or what? When Schools of Art were originally established by the Government the ruling idea was to *strengthen* the manufacturing industries of the country and to give such a training to the rising generation as to enable them to compete on more equal

Appendix

terms with the foreign workmen, whose skilled technical training is the admiration and envy of all who have the well-being of the English workman at heart. Those who can remain at a secondary school until sixteen or later will have *their* chance in due course, but the poorer lad who enters a workshop, say, when fourteen years old will be, unless I misread the Circular, shut out from the benefits he is entitled to, of evening tuition at some School of Art.

"I am writing on behalf of those who cannot help themselves, who will be great sufferers unless this Circular, in which there is but a modicum of good, is immediately withdrawn and consigned, like its several predecessors, into the paper-basket.

"'A MANUFACTURER.'"

From the *Schoolmaster*, 10th August, 1912.

"SIR,—I am very glad to see that the *Schoolmaster*, in its leading article in last week's issue, strongly advocates the revision of the Circular 786 before it is finally made operative in the Schools of Art in the country, for if carried out in accordance with the extraordinary provisions of its drastic clauses it will have the effect of closing, as you say, half the Art Schools in the country. I would go further, and say that if the Art Schools in the future are to be regulated and governed in the terms of this Circular the occupation of the great majority of the Art masters will be gone, and that only a few—half a dozen at the most—of the larger schools will be able to exist. This, however, may be the chief aim of the authors of the Circular, and a certain amount of colour is given to this state of things when we find the names of those who publicly advocate the suppression of Art education to the masses have been added to the Board of Education's new Committee for Art Teaching. Mr. Reginald Blomfield, the architect, who is, I understand, a member of this new committee, stated in his recent address delivered to the National Society of Art Masters, on 'State-aided Art Training in England,' that the amateur ought to be excluded from education in a State-aided Art School, and quotes Mr. Burridge very largely in reference as to what the functions of an Art School ought to be, who in his turn gives the time-honoured adage a fresh airing, that which is so dear to all arts and crafts societies—namely, 'The aim of a School of Art is to make the artist a better craftsman, and the craftsman a better artist.' Very good indeed is this old proverb, but it does not go far enough in the definition of the functions of a State-aided School of Art, which should include the teaching of Art and Art appreciation to the masses, and not only to the clever or favoured few, for without having an educated public to appreciate Art, architecture, and all forms of handicraft, the professional artist or Art worker, whom Mr. Blomfield—or, rather,

South Kensington and its Art Training

Mr. Burridge—advocates should alone be allowed to enter the doors of a State-aided Art School, how would the artist or craftsman be enabled to live? I hold it is the business of the State to educate the amateur and the masses generally in Art quite as much as, if not more than, to educate the professional artist or craftsman only. Is Mr. Blomfield going to define the word 'amateur,' or to differentiate between him and the professional, so that he may assist the Board of Education in keeping out such persons from the State-aided Schools of Art? He has gone so far in his wisdom as to say that he will be pleased 'to contribute his parting kick' to expel the amateur from our Schools of Art. This kicking out of the amateur by Mr. Blomfield and a few of his advisers and friends should be prevented in the interests of artists, architects, and craftsmen for reasons I have pointed out.

"Mr. Blomfield argues that because 72 per cent. of the total works sent from Schools of Art to the National Competition of 1910 were not admitted to the competition they were therefore 'really bad,' a curious argument to come from an architect, or from anyone who understands the early attempts of Art students; but the more surprising part of Mr. Blomfield's statistics is this conclusion: that 72 per cent. of students' drawings means '72 per cent. of young men and women,' when it is understood that many students send from one to a dozen works each! When an architect gets up and talks like this to a meeting of Art masters, and makes such absurd statements about our systems of Art teaching, we must come to the conclusion that he has not had sufficient knowledge of his subject, and if such kind of people are to be made members of a committee for the carrying out of any scheme of national Art education, it is to be strongly hoped that they will always be in the minority.

"A.R.T."



V & A -NATIONAL ART LIBRARY



3 8041 800 14494 1